

8 Must-Have Dive Computers • The Future of Video—See Inside...

# Skin Diver

THE WORLD'S MOST READ SCUBA DIVING AND SNORKELING MAGAZINE • SEPTEMBER 2001

New Shark Dive  
CAYMAN GETS TEETH!

700 Islands of Adventure  
Our Guide to **THE BAHAMAS**

AROUND THE WORLD  
WITH STEVE, PART 2—  
Visiting the Gray Gods of TIKI

THE BERMUDA FILES  
Diving Wrecks for Clues

WHEN 1,000 WORDS ARE NOT ENOUGH  
How to Create Stories with Your Photos

*Alert Diver*  
EDITION



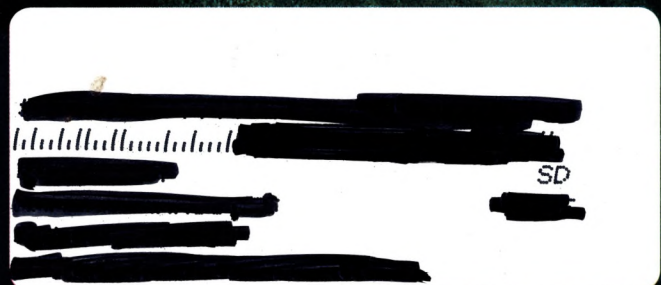
DIVERS

ALERT

**DAN**

NETWORK

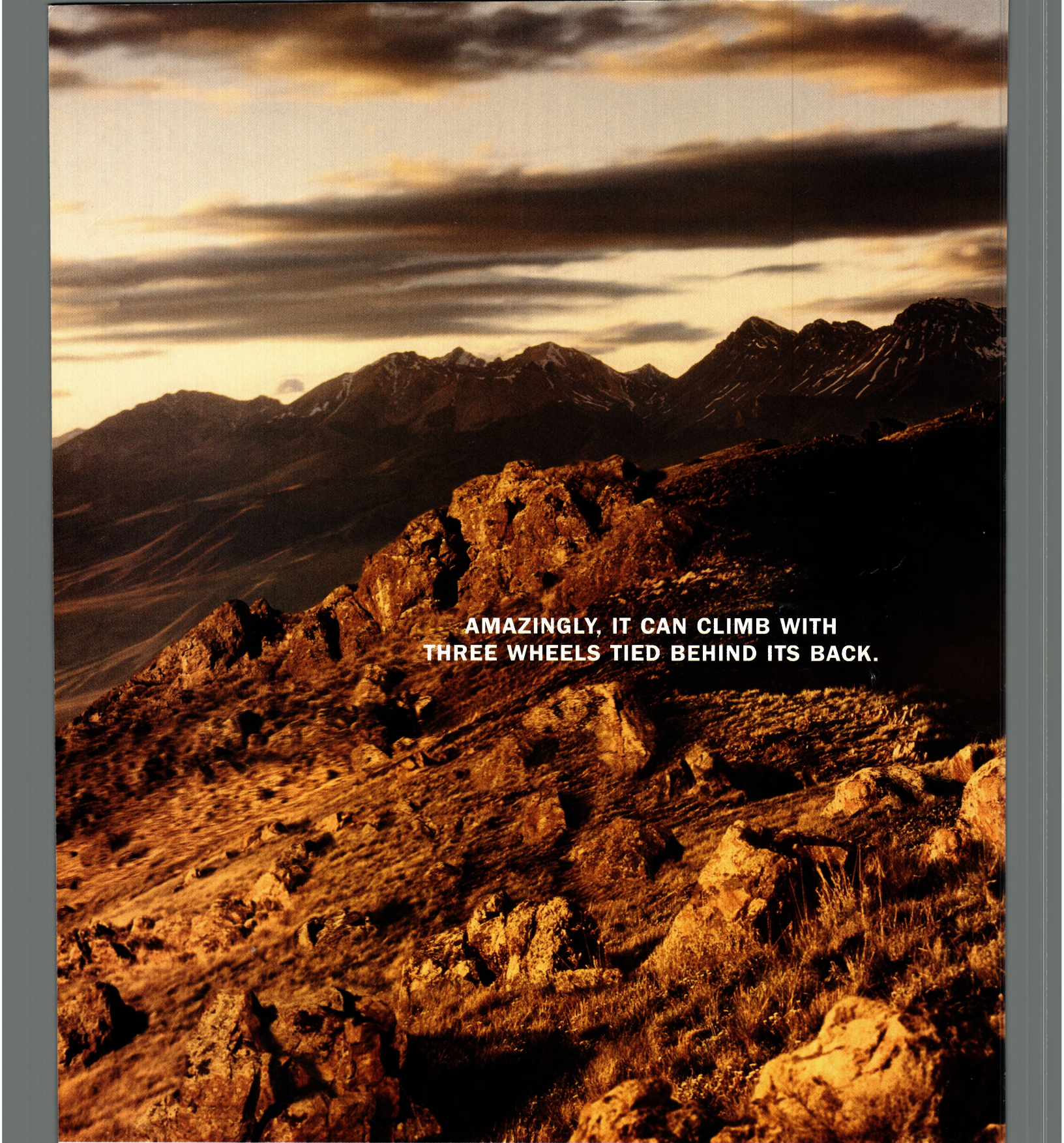
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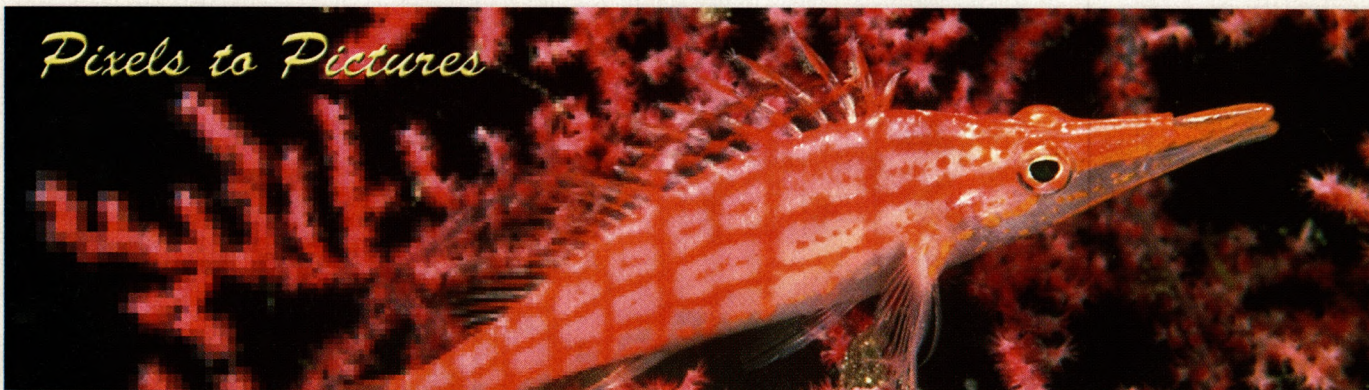
# True Digital UNDERWATER Systems

## Flash and the Digital Camera

Many digital cameras fire their built-in flash more than once when taking a flash picture. This happens so fast it is difficult to see — a small preflash is fired to help the camera determine focus, exposure and/or color balance. After the preflash the camera then fires the flash to illuminate the subject and the camera takes the picture.

For an external flash system to achieve proper exposure it must duplicate what the camera's built-in flash is doing. The Ikelite DS Sensor detects the light from the camera's built in flash and instructs any Ikelite Digital Substrobe to mimic the output of the camera's built-in flash.

## *Pixels to Pictures*



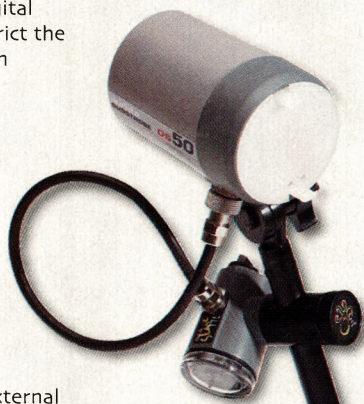
## DS50 Substrobe

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Most housings allow use of the camera's built-in flash and/or the addition of the external

Ikelite DS50 Substrobe with the DS Sensor which adds full automation to digital still cameras. Cameras such as the Nikon CP 950, 990 and 995 which provide strobe connections can use the full line of Ikelite Substrobes.



Housing shown is for  
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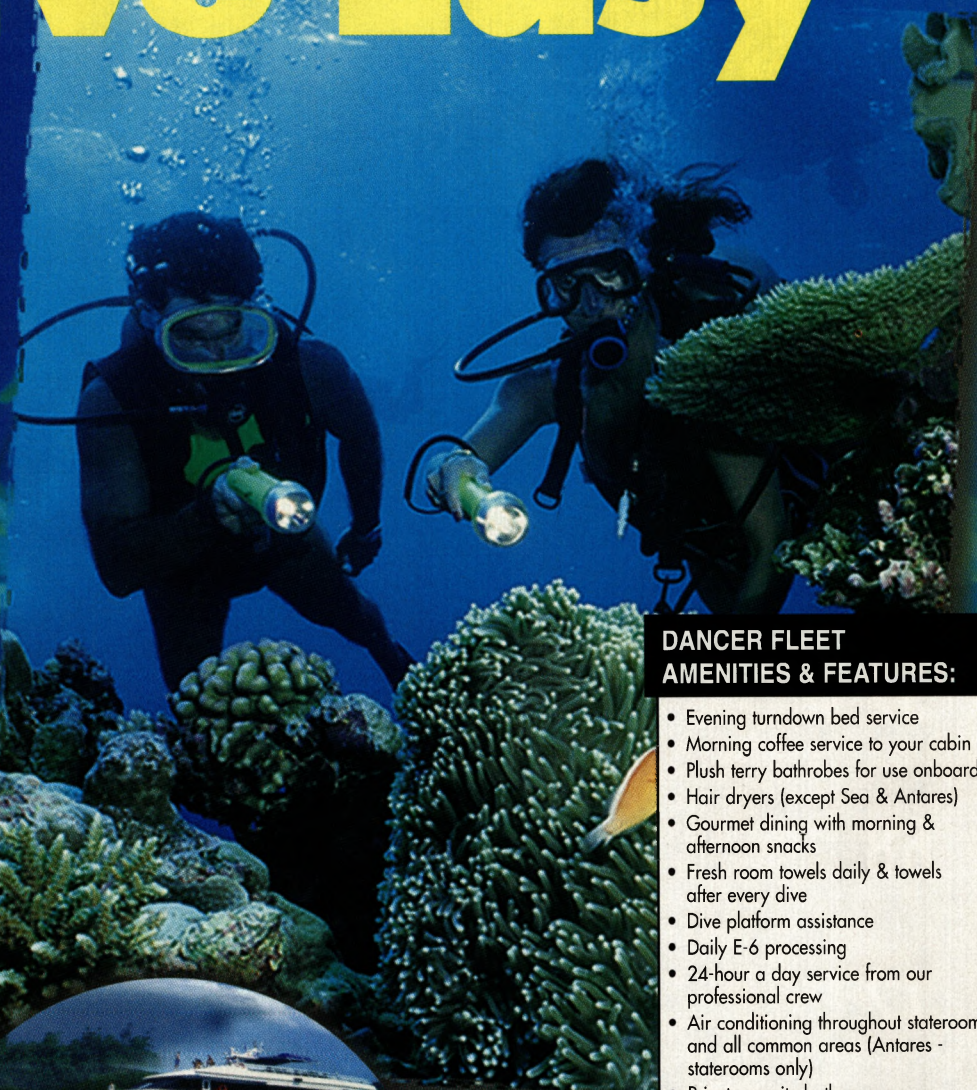
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Background photo:  
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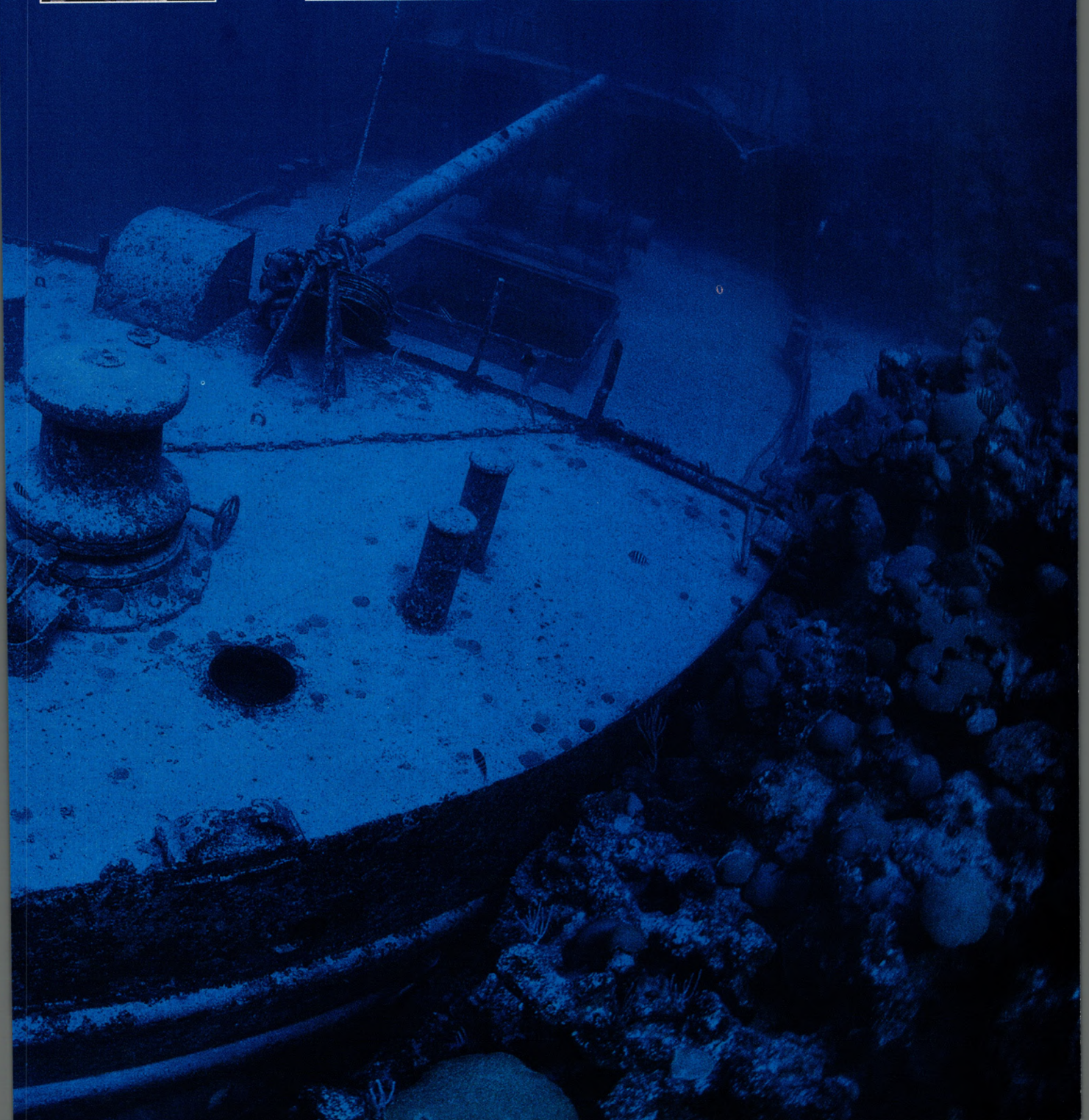
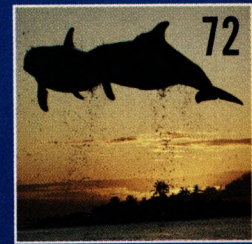
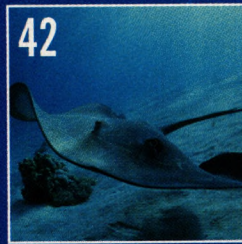
• Check out the Bahamas destination guide • Learn about the Roatan U/W Photo/Video Championship • Register to win dive trips

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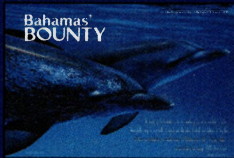
# Skin Diver®

Volume Fifty • Number Nine





**BAHAMAS** Let's talk numbers: 100,000—square miles of crystal blue water; 750—miles the Bahamas stretches off Florida's



Atlantic Coast; 12—islands with professional dive operations; 8—live-aboard dive vessels in the area; 6—types of diving, including shark, dolphin and blue hole; 2—years it would take you to spend just one day on *each* Bahamian island. Add it all up on page 52.

**BAY ISLANDS** Self-proclaimed "the world's most jaded diver," Fred Garth says the Bay Islands made him cry like a kid in a



candy store. Popsicle-like purple tunicates, bubble gum-colored barrel sponges, Whale Sharks way bigger than a Big Gulp—enough dive treats for an underwater Willy Wonka Factory. Get a sugar blitz on page 72.

**BERMUDA** The truth is out there—but just how deep is it? Over 400 vessels have fallen prey to Bermuda's reefs, making wreck divers

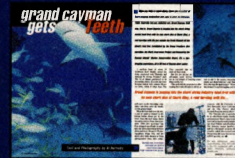


gear up with great anticipation and investigators scratch their heads. Parrotfish, angelfish and Sergeant Majors inhabit these reefs, laden with thick sponge and coral growth. If only the fishies could talk, they might tell us the secrets of the "Bermuda Files." See page 82.

**COZUMEL** "Fast boats" is what they call them. Twin-engine sleds that the Experienced Diver Programs in Cozumel employ for one purpose: To get you diving—now. There are Southern Stingrays, Loggerhead Turtles, and even-better-than-the-rumors visibility. It's a grade-A dive excursion. Check out "Advanced Adventures in Cozumel," page 48.



**GRAND CAYMAN** It keeps reinventing itself, and now Grand Cayman has been added to the must-do shark diving list of every shark-



crazed diver out there. And, in the heat of the shark feeding debate, this Shark Alley dive is an example of doing things right. You should never have to worry about these awesome creatures confusing divers with food. "Cayman Gets Teeth," on page 68.

**TAHITI** Steve Alexander is sailing around the world, and his recent stop in Moorea has reprioritized his life. He no longer dreams



of mansions and Porsches, instead it's Blacktip and Gray Reef Sharks. And his wife? She's sneaking out to feed the rays Steve's favorite sardines (in tomato sauce). Think we should send someone out to get them? Nah. See page 42.





# CONTRIBUTORS

During **TOM MORRISEY's** trip to Cozumel, he jumped at the chance to do a night dive, using an HID light designed for cave and shipwreck exploration. "The HID light throws a beam



more brilliant than an aircraft landing light," says Morrisey. "I was picking out stingrays and octopi from better than 100 feet away. It easily made me the most popular guy on the dive, and when we got back on the boat, everybody wanted a light just like mine—until I told them how much it cost." 🐟

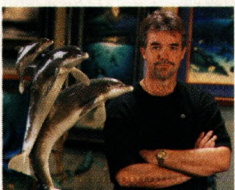
Investigation is the name of the game. Whether trying to capture better images, write a more intriguing story or learn about a particular subject, **A. SCOTT JOHNSON** is always in search



of clues. He's a detective, first and foremost, and his most recent case took Johnson to Bermuda to

truly test his powers of deduction. Follow Johnson as he unravels "The Bermuda Files." 🐟

For more than two decades, **WYLAND** has captivated the world with his landmark murals and spectacular depictions of marine life. His latest project is the next phase of the Wyland Ocean Challenge, an art and science educational curriculum that introduces school children to the idea of protecting the creatures that live in our oceans, lakes, streams, ponds and wetlands. Wyland shares his knowledge in his monthly column, Blue Adventures for Kids. 🐟



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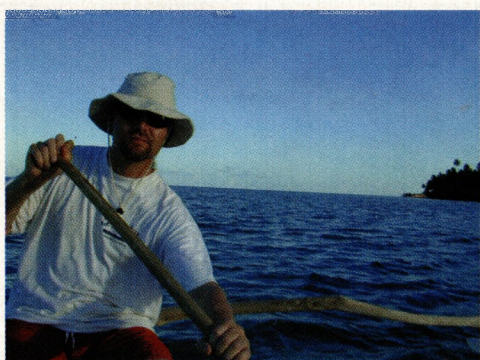
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JUST ABOUT EVERY WEEKEND, MY BUDDY AND I TAKE HIS son's fishing boat and head off to one of our favorite dive sites. It's about a one-minute ride from the dock to the breakwall of a busy marina. We go there so often because every time we slip over the side of the boat we discover something new. Each season, each hour and each dive offers us a new experience. And the more you know a place, the more new discoveries you get. We've been doing this for years, and although we're familiar with nearly every crack and crevice in the breakwall and fold

in the sand, the dive continues to both surprise and mesmerize us.

It's like that most for our favorite destinations, too. Long-time *Skin Diver* contributor Michael Lawrence has been traveling to or living in The Islands of the Bahamas off and on for nearly 20 years. For him, it's a local dive. But he keeps going back. And for divers on the East Coast, especially Florida, the Bahamas offers a lifetime of divers' wish list entries, and it's literally right next door. Heck, most of the live-aboards that ply the waters of the Bahamas' 700 islands even originate in South Florida. And with a potent mix of sharks, dolphins, wrecks, walls, shallow reefs and stress-busting warm water, it's never the same. It just keeps getting newer and newer.

Another boomerang destination for U.S. divers, La Isla Cozumel has long been an underwater mecca. And thousands of divers—from the newly certified to seen-everything sea dogs—make annual pilgrimages here. Divers from Texas visit so often and so frequently they've nick-named the island Texas-South. Why return? Why not try someplace new? How about a consistent 200 feet of viz, ever-changing technicolor reefs, enough

## Newer & Newer

dive flags to block out the sun and Mexican-style island ambience? Writer Tom Morrissey knows why divers keep coming back. Like my beloved breakwall, Cozumel always

offers new stories, new encounters and new experiences. The old favorites, you see, are perpetually new.

Then there's Tahiti. Only seven nonstop hours from the West Coast, it's a place of such beauty that you could drop a camera on the ground, have the shutter accidentally release and still have a postcard image to take home. This month our itinerant around-the-world sailor/diver, Steve Alexander, writes about his "stopover" in Moorea. He just dropped anchor, stayed for a month and tried to subdue his dive-jones. He planned on leaving, then made the mistake of one more, bright, shiny, new dive at a local site called Tiki. His anchor began taking on permanent residents. Each dive excited him more. He cried when he finally left. He just couldn't get enough of the "Gray Gods of Tiki"—sharks, rays and more sharks.

Another bit of newness you might notice this month: the look of our departments. Because we're never quite satisfied, Art Director Kimberly Richey and our art staff have been hard at work updating our monthly departments, giving them a cleaner, crisper and more inviting style.

Finally, take a peek at the masthead. You'll find a new name, attached to a new title: Marty Snyderman, Field Editor. A world-class photographer, top-notch writer and damn near expert about everything that drips salt-water. He's been authoring our Ask the Pro column for nearly two years and contributing to the magazine since he had hair. You'll be hearing from Marty frequently in the coming months as we send him thither and yon to get his unique slant on the world of diving. We're lucky to have him, and I'm sure you'll enjoy the experience he brings to the magazine.

Good diving. 🐟

TY SAWYER, EDITOR



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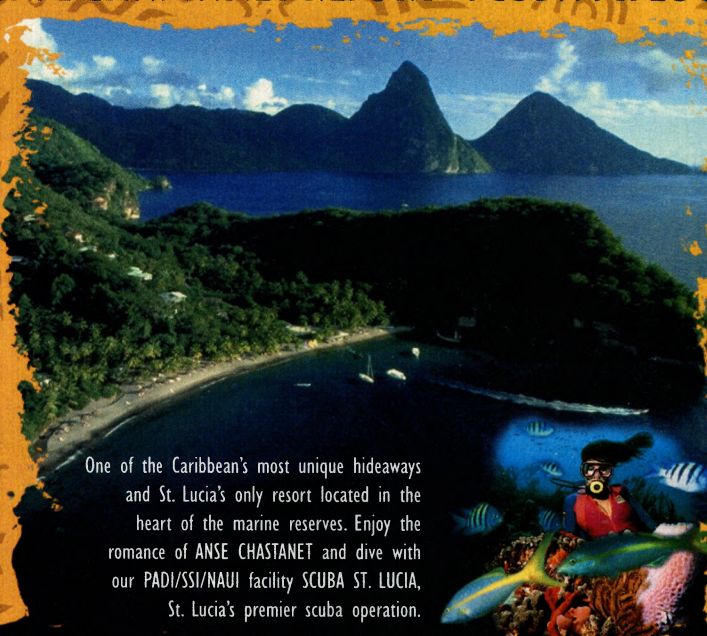
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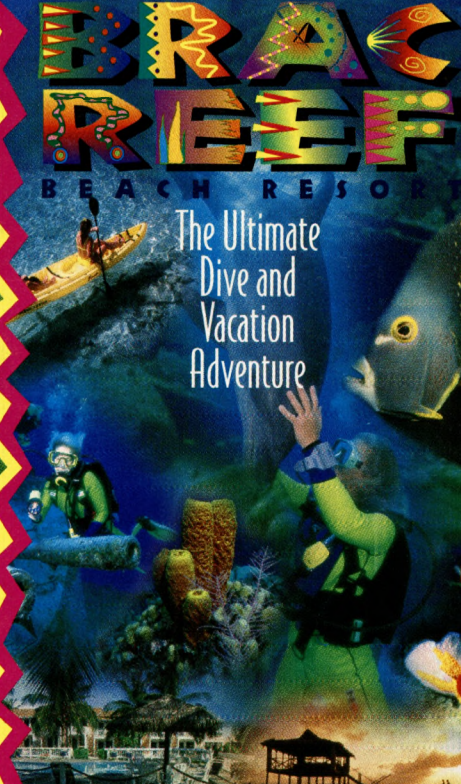


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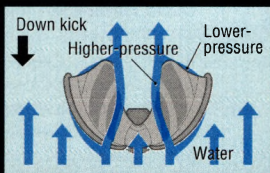
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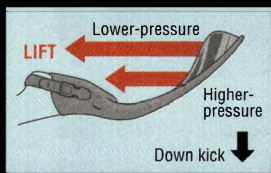
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### Kudos for the Cover

I just picked up the June 2001 issue, and I had to write in about the cover photo. It is absolutely beautiful! I've been thinking of taking a photography class and this picture just made up my mind for me.

—Hugh Jennings, via e-mail

### Don't Cross the Solomon Islands Off Your List

I noted in a recent issue of *Skin Diver* magazine, in Freeflow, a "Travel Advisory" concerning Sabah, Borneo. I'd like to offer my comments on a nation experiencing similar negative press.

I have recently returned from a one-month stay in the Solomon Islands. Since experiencing a coup last year, the Solomon Islands have been advertised by Australian,

## Readers Speak Out

New Zealand and U.S. governments as [possibly] dangerous. The result has been disastrous for the tourism industry, including the dive industry.

My experience in the Solomon Islands did not reflect the warnings presented by the governments. Rather, I found the entire country to be quite safe and hospitable. Particularly with the current marked drop in tourism, one can expect to be treated quite well. As an added bonus, the Solomon dollar is now extremely devalued against other currencies—meaning that accommodations, food and dives are quite inexpensive (particularly when booked in the Solomon Islands).

I believe that if you were to publish a notice that the Solomon Islands is quite safe and a great place to dive, you would be doing a great service to divers as well as the dive operators and tourist industry in the Solomon Islands.

—Chuck DeRoller, via e-mail



In my opinion [Fred Garth] writes like an artist (or cartoonist might be a better description), painting a picture in my mind that inevitably makes me laugh out loud.

### Word from a Sailor

I got a heads up from a [*Skin Diver*] subscriber telling me about the June issue. I went to the store that same day and got a copy. Sure as heck, there we are!

Incredible article ("The Old Navy Shakedown," June 2001), I must say, although I'm not a literary judge. Very readable as well as informative. Thank you VERY much for the outstanding article and job you did regarding my ship, the USS *Spiegel Grove* (LSD-32). Everything was perfect!

—Kevin Flatley, via e-mail

### Double Delight

In the latest issue of *Skin Diver*, much to my excitement there are two articles by one of my most favorite diving writers, Fred Garth. In my opinion he writes like an artist (or cartoonist might be a better description), painting a picture in my mind that inevitably makes me laugh out loud. If you get a chance, pop open the magazine and read about the old navy salt and some tekkie diving. You'll learn something and laugh, too.

—Anonymous, via e-mail

### Oops, He Did It Again

I enjoyed reading Fred Garth's articles in *Skin Diver* ("Cayman Extreme" and "The Old Navy Shakedown").

Over the last several years I've begun to lose interest reading articles in *Skin Diver*, but your pseudo-technical and light-hearted style brings a much needed shot to the magazine. I've always felt that I could and would advertise in magazines that I read. You make advertising in *Skin Diver* much easier.

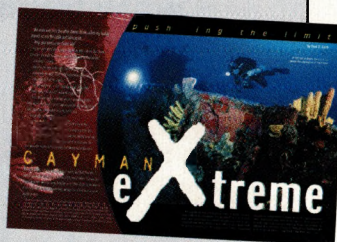
—Dave Hancock, via e-mail

### Do Dolphins Really Wanna Play?

*Skin Diver* magazine has become my favorite dive magazine because of its well-known contributors, interesting articles and quality reporting.

I was disappointed, however, in the article, "The Way of the Dolphin," in the May issue. The article stated that most dolphins kept in captivity are "...generally kept by responsible organizations who make every effort to ensure the animals' health and happiness." This statement may be true for many operations in the United States, but conditions outside the U.S. are quite the contrary. Last December, a dolphin in La Paz, Mexico, died of stomach ulcers and inflammation caused by the stress she experienced in her forced "frolics" with tourists. In the Dominican Republic, dolphins are sometimes held in pens only 10 yards by 17 yards and forced to perform for many hours straight for eager tourists. Many divers frequent places where these abuses occur, and it is important that a reputable dive magazine such as *Skin Diver* keep all divers aware of these animals' plight.

—Katy Reinhard, via e-mail





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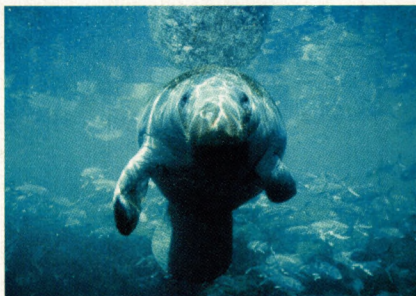
## Save the Manatee Club



SAVE THE MANATEE ORGANIZATION WAS started 20 years ago by Florida's then-governor Bob Graham (now U.S. Senator) and Jimmy Buffett, the renowned singer/songwriter, environmentalist and author. Later, Save the Manatee Club (SMC) was formed "...to channel the public's desire to help protect Manatees," stated Judith Vallee, executive director of the 40,000 member group.

SMC now works in almost every aspect of Manatee conservation, and maintains an office in Tallahassee to lobby the legislature on issues important to the welfare of Manatees.

*For information about SMC and/or Adopt-A-Manatee program, contact (800) 432-5646 or check out [www.savethemanatee.org](http://www.savethemanatee.org).*



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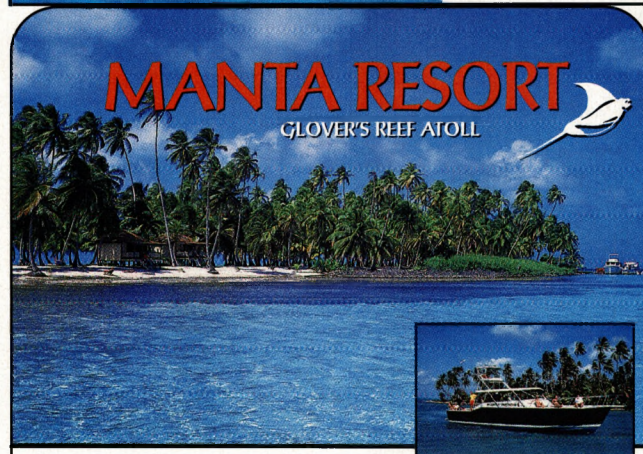
*For more information on the Hammer-Heads, visit [www.h-heads.com](http://www.h-heads.com) or contact Lydia Eldridge at (858)616-6408.*

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DIVERS FROM SAM'S TOURS HAVE ADDED TO THE LIST OF underwater historical sites in Palau by discovering the only known World War II United States warplane to sink in the Pacific island nation's waters.

On June 24, 2000, a search team from Sam's Dive Tours located the Martin PBM Mariner in about 70 feet of water in the Kossol Passage area. The plane, with a wing span of nearly 120 feet, sits upside down on the sandy bottom, its fuselage, wings, engines and armament still visible among the corals and sponges that have made the wreck their home.

"This is truly an amazing find," said Sam Scott, owner of Sam's Tours. "Palau played a major role in the Pacific theatre during WW II, and I'm glad we were able to find a reminder of that historical period."

One of the pilots of the seaplane said that on December 14, 1944, the PBM, with its 1,900 horsepower radial engines, came in for a landing near the seaplane's tender, the USS *Kenneth Whiting*. A depth charge or sonic torpedo fell from the plane on touch-down and exploded. The blast ripped into the rear section of the plane, and it quickly sank to the bottom.



## First WW II U.S. Warplane Found In Palauan Waters

"We got caught in the start of a typhoon and got blown off course," Bob Wisecarver, the third pilot and navigator of the seaplane, said. "I misjudged wind velocity and as a result, ended off course enough that we had to jettison everything not tied down in order to conserve fuel. We got a bearing fix from the *Kenneth Whiting* and came in OK, but because the bomb racks had been sprung from hard landings, the three depth charges and one sonic torpedo were still in the bomb racks.

(continued on page 67)

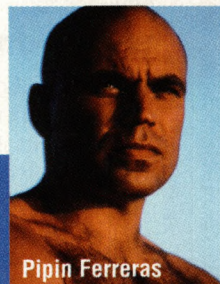
## Ocean *It Will*

TAKE THREE DEEP BREATHS. Inhale...exhale,...inhale...exhale,...inhale...hold.

Breath-hold diving is one of the most difficult types of diving to master. And to prove it, one man decided to ask two divers the question: How deep can you go on a single breath?

The man is Bob Talbot, the two world-champion freedivers are Pipin Ferreras and Umberto Pelizzari, and the answer reveals itself in *OceanMen*, the IMAX film scheduled to open in the U.S. this month.

"I wanted to make a movie about freediving," said Talbot, wildlife cinematographer of *Free Willy* and *Flipper*, and one of the directors of *Dolphins—the Ride* (IMAX). "But the divers go down and come up, go down and come up...that takes care of four minutes, what would I do with the next 38 minutes of the film?"



Pipin Ferreras



Umberto Pelizzari

Photo (Palau) Kevin Davidson

## SAVING THE CALYPSO

by Wyland

IT HAS BEEN 51 YEARS SINCE JACQUES Cousteau took his first voyage on the *Calypso*. The refitted WW II British YMS class minesweeper was an international symbol for the care and management of global resources.

On a more personal level, the ship

embodied adventure. To millions of children like myself who gathered to watch the "Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau," in the early '70s, the *Calypso* transported us to fabulous places. We were there as the *Calypso* team followed the migration of whales off the coast of California and tangled with sharks in the Red Sea.

On a recent trip with The Cousteau Society, I traveled to La Rochelle, France, where the original *Calypso* is berthed. What I saw shattered my childhood memories. The vessel looked de-

cayed, left to the elements and listing slightly to port, barely afloat. Bob Steele, who has been with the Society for 20 years and who has seen the ship count-



The deck in shambles.



# Men: *Leave You Breathless*

But for Ferreras and Pelizzari there was a lot more. Their lives, their training, their spirituality, it's all linked their undying passion for freediving. And as the saying goes, the movie wrote itself.

At a recent sneak preview of some too-brief footage of the film at Club Med in San Salvador, Bahamas, *Skin Diver* and a crowd of more than 100 people intently watched on a small projection screen as Ferreras attempted to break the "no limits" freediving record of over 500 feet. With indescribable grace, Ferreras disappeared into the blue, speeding on an apnea ballast sled past crew members and safety divers. The blue faded into black, the hum of the sled became the only sound, and Ferreras headed on a spiritual and physical vigil to the turnaround point—534 feet.

Even while watching it on a much smaller screen than the standard IMAX screen (IMAX screens are 10 times larger than the traditional cinema screens), viewers felt as if they were on their own sleds, running side by side with Ferreras, holding their breath.

Talbot and his team of divers and cameramen and women survived the daunting

task of filming the spectacular lives of Ferreras and Pelizzari on the IMAX medium—but just barely.

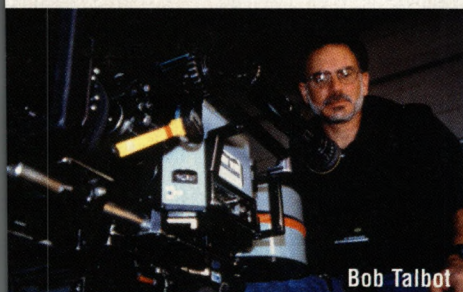
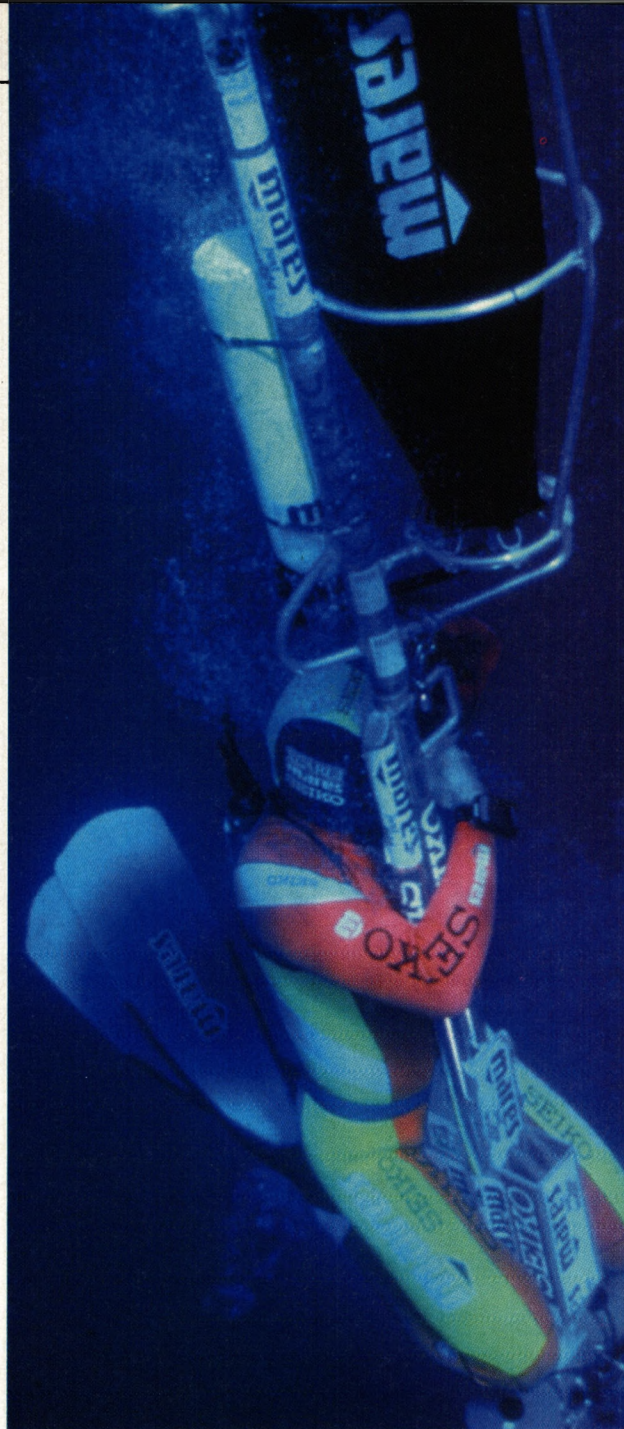
"Each camera weighed around 450 pounds, contained 1,000 feet of 65 mm film and allowed for only three minutes of shooting per roll," Talbot said in his presentation at Club Med. "We shot a total of 525 minutes."

With hundreds of minutes of footage left on the cutting room floor, *OceanMen* makes its debut this month. A masterpiece in filming, in life, in freediving.

Now, exhale. 🐟

—THC

*You would need to read this article four times while holding your breath, to come somewhat close to what freedive champions Ferreras and Pelizzari do everyday, without effort.*



Bob Talbot

Photos (OceanMen)/Courtesy H5B5 Media.



Wheelhouse.

less times, explained that she had been docked in Singapore for minor repairs, when dockyard workers adjusted her moor-

ing lines and the ship was pulled over by a submerged barge. A chunk of metal on the barge punctured a hole in *Calypso's* hull, sinking the ship. After 11 days underwater, she was raised and towed back to France where she was placed at the Musée Maritime in La Rochelle. Plans for the funding of her restoration have been slowed by circumstances beyond the Society's control. It is clear that *Calypso's* only hope is for those of us who were inspired by her to take action and raise the necessary

funds to resurrect her to her former glory. La Rochelle is a great choice for *Calypso's* home, but the city, which cares for the ship, is severely underfunded. It desperately needs assistance to restore the ship. Public contributions that could be matched by the city could help restore the ship. With enough support, *Calypso* can once again inspire a new generation as a floating museum. 🐟

For information, contact the Society at (800) 441-4395 or visit [www.cousteausociety.org](http://www.cousteausociety.org).

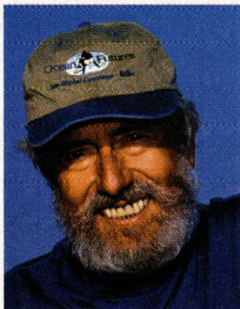
Photos/Ron Everdij.





## New Hope for Sea Otters, Kelp Forests

A healthy ecosystem  
...is also the key to  
renewing the rich  
legacy of Coastal  
Indian culture.



Photo/Lionel Pozzoli

FOR DIVERS, THE KELP FORESTS OF THE North American Pacific Coast are one of the true wonders of the underwater world. Not only are they beautiful, with softly undulating fronds and shafts of buttery light, they are also teeming with life. In otherwise cold, deep and deserted waters, the kelp forests are like oases, full of invertebrates, fish and marine mammals. And although they appear eternal, kelp forests are rather fragile.

They depend on a delicate balance of species to remain healthy. And this balance depends in part upon the lovable sea otter. Where these mammals thrive, so does the kelp. Where they have been decimated, kelp has suffered or even disappeared.

The problem is sea urchins, which devour kelp at an alarming rate. If plentiful, otters eat enough sea urchins to keep them in check. If not, the kelp suffers and so does the ecosystem that depends upon it. A good example is Alaska, where some 80 percent of Aleutian

Sea Otters have disappeared in the last decade. As a result, urchins have flourished, greatly reducing the kelp forests and undermining nearshore productivity. For this reason, the sea otter is considered a "keystone" predator.

In Oregon, a major new effort is underway to understand sea otter biology and perhaps to reintroduce the animal to the Oregon coast, where it has been extinct for nearly a century.

It all started with a man named David Hatch, an engineer for the City of Portland and a member of the Confederated Tribe of the Siletz Indians. Several years ago, he became interested in the history of the Oregon Sea Otter, or *Elakha*, and its complex relationship with his ancestors. He recognized that the fates of the two were intimately connected, and became a tireless advocate for reestablishment of the *Elakha*, both in the minds of Oregonians and in reality.

Native coastal peoples relied on the *Elakha*



for pelts. When the pelts of the *Elakha* and the other sea otter subspecies found their way to Europe in the late 1700s, their popularity spawned a mass market. Fur hunters from Russia, England, Spain and the U.S. invaded the coast, decimating the populations of sea

**Sea otters are a keystone species of the kelp forest.**

otters—and the indigenous peoples who depended upon them. Settlers followed the hunters. In 1906, the last sea otter pelt in Oregon was sold for \$900.

In 1911, sea otters were placed under international protection, but only a handful of the animals remained in the wild and none in Oregon. As the sea otter declined, so did the kelp ecosystem

on which they depended, and the Indians who relied on this bounty for their sustenance.

Hatch wants to restore *Elakha* populations along the Oregon coast, but his concerns reach far beyond that. A healthy ecosystem is the foundation not only for the rebirth of the sea otter; it is also the key to renewing the rich legacy of coastal Indian culture.

His first step was to serve on the committee that named the new Oregon State University research vessel after the *Elakha*. He then helped to found the *Elakha* Alliance, a nonprofit group that represents a collaboration between the Oregon Zoo, the Oregon Coast Aquarium, tribal councils, state wildlife officers, university scientists and northwest environmental groups such as Ecotrust.

So far, the *Elakha* Alliance has

inspired cutting edge interdisciplinary research at Portland State University and Oregon State University. Using bones and teeth from OSU archives, Portland State biologists are analyzing mitochondrial DNA from the extinct *Elakha* (excavated from coastal middens). By comparing these samples with DNA from the existing southern and northern subspecies, the scientists may be able to determine the *Elakha*'s genetic lineage.

The research should help us reconstruct the history of the *Elakha*. Given the richness of available specimens, the researchers may be able to trace genetic variation *before* the great sea otter hunts of the 18th century, helping us understand how the species evolved.

The research will also inform attempts to restore sea otters to the Oregon coast. The *Elakha* is gone forever, but the DNA studies may identify which subspecies may be close enough genetically to be suitable for colonization. However, even if scientists turn up a match with either the southern or northern subspecies, resettlement remains a daunting challenge. An attempt to relocate northern sea otters to Oregon failed in the 1970s for unknown reasons.

But in Canada, the experiment has worked. A pilot project begun in 1969 reintroduced the animals to Vancouver

Fur hunters...invaded the coast,  
decimating the populations of sea otters—  
and the indigenous peoples who  
depended on them.

Island. With few natural predators, the population has grown by some 18 percent per year, and now numbers reach over 1,500. The kelp flourished as well, and now harbors a substantial diversity of invertebrate and fish life.

As David Hatch wrote recently on the regional website ([www.tidepool.org](http://www.tidepool.org)), "The ocean we see today is not the healthy ocean which belongs here." As he has recognized, the otter and the kelp certainly do belong. Bringing them back after an absence of over a century may be a tall order, both logistically and legally, but will prove well worth it if success is met. 🐟

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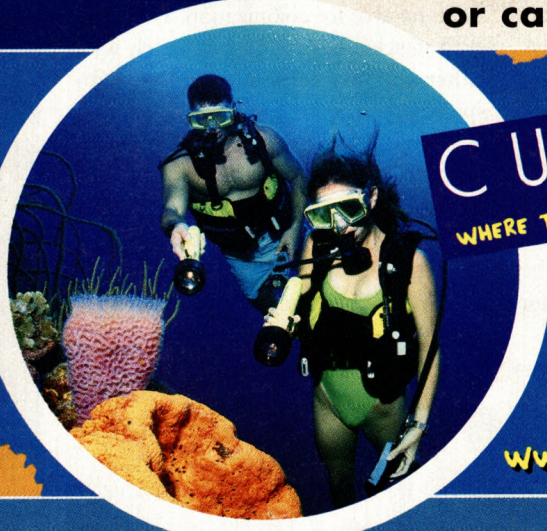
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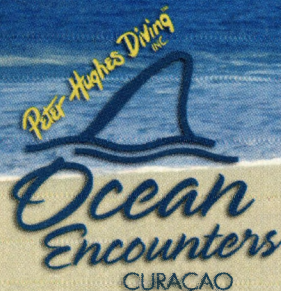
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# Create Your Photographs! Don't Take Them

BY MARTY SNYDERMAN

ASK THE PRO

*I feel like I have mastered the basic skills required to get good exposures and my subjects in focus. Now, what do you recommend I do to take better pictures? —Meredith S., Houston, TX*

MEREDITH IS INSIGHTFUL IN REALIZING that there is much more to her success than focus and exposure. Having mastered those basics, she can now begin to concentrate on the fun part of underwater photography. Meredith needs to learn how to create, or make, her own images. She should no longer settle for just taking them.

The difference between taking and creating is knowledge, determination and creativity. Implement these virtues into your photography, and your images will reach new heights far above those attained by anyone who merely follows the how-to assemble, focus and expose directions.

My advice to Meredith (and to all underwater photographers) is to try to tell us something about the ocean and about herself through her work.

First, you need to learn about the subjects you want to photograph and the environment you're working

in. Then, try to visualize exactly what you want your images to look like before you ever begin assembling your camera gear. The more details you can envision, the better. Then ask yourself questions like the following: Is there a particular behavior, action or feature that makes this subject particularly interesting? What exactly is it that you want to say to, or share with, your audience, and is this picture allowing you to do so? Do you want a diver or other element in the photograph to add perspective? How do you envision the look of the foreground and background, and why? Will your subject look best if framed horizontally, vertically or does it matter? This approach will allow you to match your equipment with your expectations, and this ability is a key to photographic success. Now that you have a specific goal in mind, you can think your way through a photographic dive plan.

Once underwater, try to get the image



Slow down, look and consider the details. This is what photographers who *create* images do. Takers just snap away.

Patience yielded this image of a Horn Shark emerging from its egg casing.





you pictured in your mind's eye. Slow down, look and consider the details. This is what photographers who create images do. Takers just snap away.

Spend a little time analyzing how you move and how your approach might disrupt ongoing behaviors, such as cleaning or courtship, or how your actions might otherwise impact potential subjects. Consider which way the current is flowing, where your subject is and where you are in

Consider which way the current is flowing, where your subject is, where you are in relation to the sun and how this information should influence the way you approach your subjects.

relation to the sun, and how this information should influence the way you approach your subjects.

With a little effort, Meredith will soon be creating photographs, not

taking them, and that difference will improve her image quality by leaps and bounds.

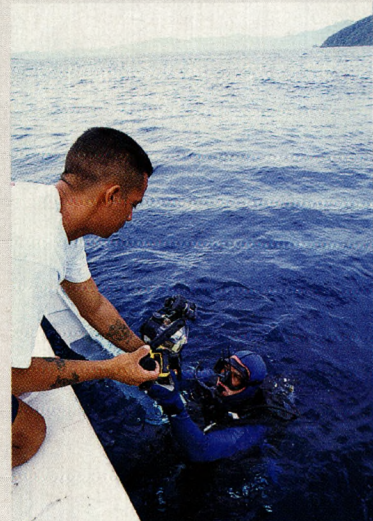
Bet the same would be true for you. 🐟

## Getting Started: Prepare, Protect and Maintain Your Camera

THE FOLLOWING TIPS ARE INTENDED TO HELP YOU prepare, protect and maintain your equipment.

Pay attention to details when you set up your camera equipment. You need to be careful and disciplined when cleaning O-rings and seating surfaces, when loading film and plugging in synch cords and strobes. Work in well-lit, dry areas that are protected from wind and free of debris.

Do yourself a huge favor. If people approach you and begin to ask questions or make small talk while you are setting up your gear, excuse yourself and tell them that you need to stay focused on the task at hand. They wouldn't intentionally distract you if they knew that doing so might cause you to break or flood gear, but sometimes people who are unaware need to be politely informed.



**Taking the time to set up your gear properly and having a divemaster hand it to you after you've entered the water will help prevent damage.**

Most damage to gear does not occur underwater. It happens with carelessness and abuse on land. Like it or not, problems are usually due to user sloppiness, not manufacturer design flaws. The result shows up underwater.

When possible, enter the water, get yourself and your diving equipment

adjusted as needed, then have someone hand your camera system down to you. Don't jump into the water with your camera system in hand if you can avoid it. When possible, hand your photo gear up to a divemaster

at dive's end, as opposed to climbing a dive ladder while using one hand to hold your camera system.

In the water, both on the surface and when submerged, hold your camera system firmly and keep the system away from dangling hoses and gauges. Don't stuff your camera into a pocket in your BC or drag it around in a goody bag. Camera lanyards are great ideas, but only if you are using the lanyard as a form of insurance, not as the primary method

of carrying your camera system.

Go slow and get comfortable diving without your hands, as most divers feel a bit awkward when diving with a camera system in their hands for the first time. Simple tasks from mask and ear clearing to inflating or deflating a BC become a bit of a challenge.

Set up your weights so that you are neutrally buoyant. Don't overweight yourself. I believe that diving and underwater photography are easier and safer when you are neutrally buoyant.

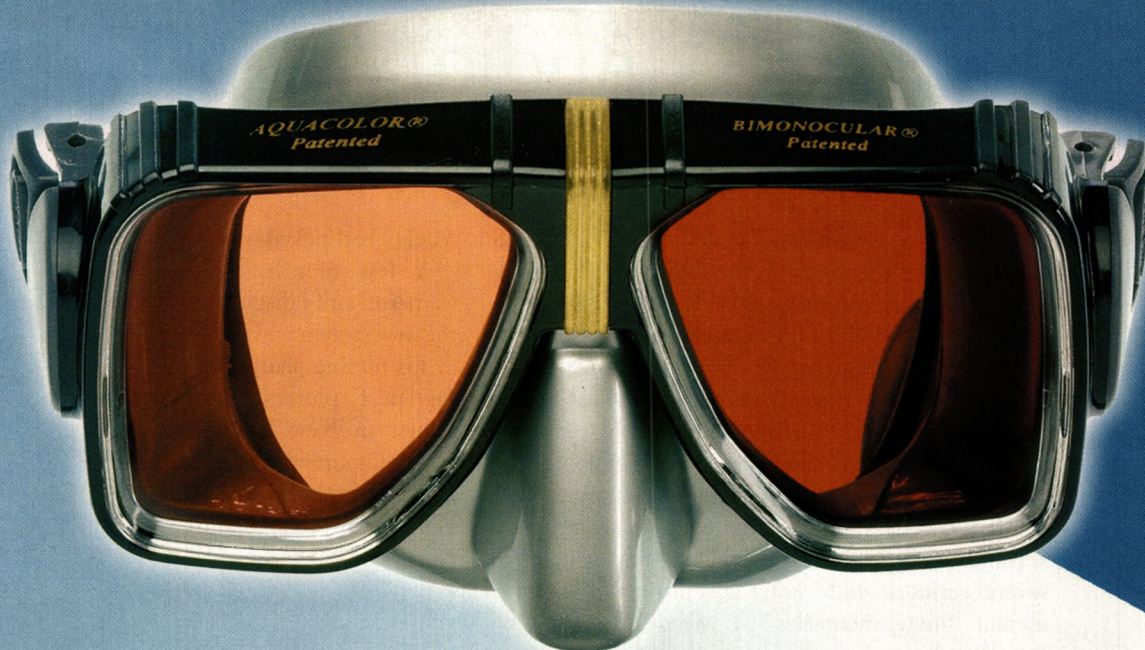
After diving in saltwater, rinse your camera system in fresh water as soon as you can. A 30-second rinse in a bucket of fresh water a few minutes after a dive is much better in terms of camera system maintenance than a one-hour soak a few hours later. You want to keep the salt from crystallizing whenever possible.

Once rinsed, remove your camera gear from the rinse bucket and store it in a protected, dry area that is designated for cameras only. 🐟

### WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT UNDERWATER PHOTOGRAPHY?

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# Audio/Video Gatling Guns, Part 2

LAST COLUMN, WE LEFT THE REVEREND AL GIDDINGS with his voice ringing from the digital hi-definition-video camera pulpit. Brother Val Rentkins filled us in on a housing for said camera at about the same price as a small church! Now we hear from more of the usual suspects and their views on this mini-revolution in underwater (and surface) photography, or more accurately, this image/audio acquisition system.

Jean-Michel Cousteau (whose charming grin brings some class to this mag on a regular basis) is a seasoned film and video producer—responsible for several series of underwater adventure and environmental “huggumentaries.” I asked him what he thought about these digital hi-def systems, and I chuckled when he repeated the Giddings sermon—if not word-for-word, then certainly idea-for-idea. “Ah-ha,” I said, “You’ve been listening to Al Giddings!”

Jean-Michel smiled indulgently and said, “Al is always on the edge, so you can be sure he knows all about these systems and either has one or is getting one...and I am sure it will be the same with...” he ticked off a half dozen well-known industry names. I was amazed. I had already talked to all of them, and Jean-Michel was absolutely right, they’re all heading there—some grimly, some with eager anticipation—but all marching to the digi hi-def drummer.

“Who’s leading the pack?” I asked.

Jean-Michel dispensed another one of his charming, gallic smiles and said, “In their minds, each of them...but I, personally, would give Jim Cameron the edge.”

James Cameron, best known for...well, you know all that stuff already. When he was directing the futuristic underwater thriller *The Abyss*, Cameron spent nearly all of his time underwater, shoulder to shoulder with cameraman Al Giddings—a fairly “real-time” director. (He was one of the fingers that Jean-

Michel had ticked off.)

A few months ago, Cameron and I discussed the new system and some of his filming plans during an Explorers Club dinner in New York. I was complimented that he didn’t bother with the litany of advantages and possibilities—he assumed that I already knew them. His interest was in the apex of the full spectrum...the cherry on the top of the sundae—imaging in 3-D.

Cameron and I talked again, recently, at Earthship Productions—his Malibu, CA, facility. I had gotten myself up to speed and could now give him some new wrinkles and thoughts on his proposed U/W hardware. Talking to Cameron on technical matters is an interesting proposition. He gives back precisely what he receives. You give him good, valuable information—he gives you good stuff in return. But if someone gushes platitudes (“Oh, I just loved the part where...”) he performs the patented “Cameron ball-valve maneuver”—his face still looks toward the offender, but his brain does a 90-degree shift—you can actually see the quarter-turn take place behind his eyes.

Fortunately, I suffered no such fate, and we discussed the details of capturing on film what is normally seen by the human eye (the basis of 3-D photography). We have two eyes that see any given image from a slightly different perspective—it’s this ocular offset that gives us the sense of depth...the third dimension.

This 3-D effect can be captured with reasonable accuracy by using two lenses with centers the same distance apart as the human eyes—about 69 mm or 2.75 inches. This is called the “inter-ocular” distance. All the other shooters that I talked to knew the principle, but only Cameron and Giddings really had it down pat.

Simple matter (it would seem): two lenses with centers 2.75 inches apart. The problem is that the latest, greatest, high-def, super-optic lenses have diameters of 3.5 inches. Put the lenses with their sides touching, and the centers are still 3.5 inches apart; not nearly close enough (and these \$25,000 lenses get most uncooperative if you grind off an inch off one side). But the bigger problem is the use of a correct-



“Who’s leading the pack [in digital hi-definition imaging]?” I asked. Jean-Michel said, “...I, personally, would give Jim Cameron the edge.”



**Director Jim Cameron on location for *The Abyss* in North Carolina, 1989.**



ing dome. Think about it. The lens must be centered in the dome for proper correction. Two lenses can't occupy the same center, obviously. Use two domes? Nope, that makes the lenses too far apart—not even close to the inter-ocular magical 2.75 inches.

This is the kind of stuff Cameron and I tossed back and forth. When I got back to the office I had Mike Humphrey, our senior technical guru, sketch out my thoughts as a series of autocad drawings, and I fired them back to Cameron. In classic Cameron “make-love-to-nine-women-and-have-a-baby-in-a-month” style, he already had a number of people working on the problem concurrently, including Vince Pace, who's well-known for his professional lighting equipment and video housings. (You can see one possible configuration in the pictured drawing.) These particular lenses do have a small part of the facing sides ground away to achieve the required inter-ocular separation. (Note that this setup is only illustrative and not the actual Cameron design.)

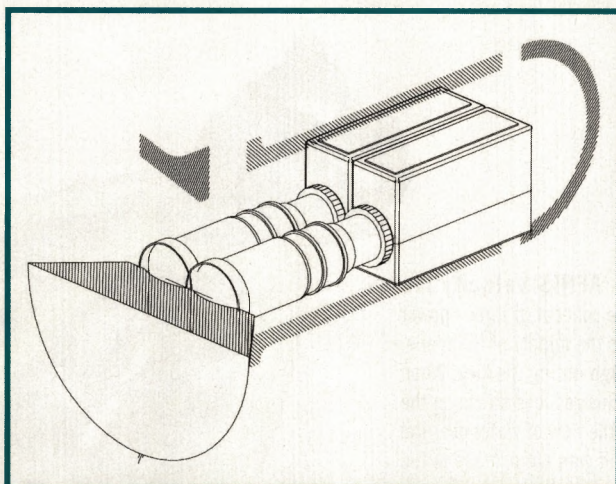
So what's Cameron gonna do with the new camera systems? He and Jean-Michel have teamed to form a new filming venture called *Ocean Challenge*. It's planned as a series of *Calypso*-style voyages of the 21st century.

Just as Jean-Michel's father and his famous crew broke new ground in cinematography, Jean-Michel has combined his vision of Ocean Futures with the imagination and the technical wizardry of James Cameron to produce this deep-water odyssey series, using deep-diving micro-submersibles such as Deep Rover and Deep Worker. Cameron and Jean-Michel will travel the world with their crew and a changing group of guest experts.

Boy, talk about an “A” team. Jean-Michel is cautious, though, even in the midst of optimism, since he is no stranger to the incredible twists and turns between budget and airing. He says, “When you turn on your TV and it is there...then it is real—not before.”

Next time, I'd like to tell you a little of the plans, aspirations and incredible amount of work that goes into putting together such a series.

In the meantime, I'm already way over my word limit—the page Nazis at *Skin Diver* have put another black cross in my file and my old friend Emory Kristoff, of *National Geographic*, is



Three-dimensional images can optimally be captured by using two lenses with centers the same distance apart as the human eyes (this is called inter-ocular distance; ideally 2.75 inches). But U/W the correcting dome for the housing presents an optical problem. Two domes would require the lenses to be configured too far apart, creating incorrect inter-ocular distance. One option is to create two “pockets” in acrylic plastic or optical glass (see sketch above). The lenses would require a mild corrective grind to achieve correct inter-ocular distance, but should function as intended.

going to be PO'd 'cause I didn't have a chance to mention that it was he who did a lot of the recent work in 3-D underwater still images. Work that, in some respects, showed the moving image guys the way. Also, I didn't get to talk about Bob Ballard's Black Sea expedition as I said I would. But I will get to it down the road.

I leave you with the two sentences that Cameron used as an ending to an incredibly long e-mail asking for endless minute, technical details on the Deep Worker-class submersible: “I have many questions. It is a curse.” 🐟

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BY RYAN ALLEN AND DARYL CARSON



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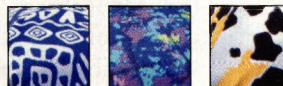
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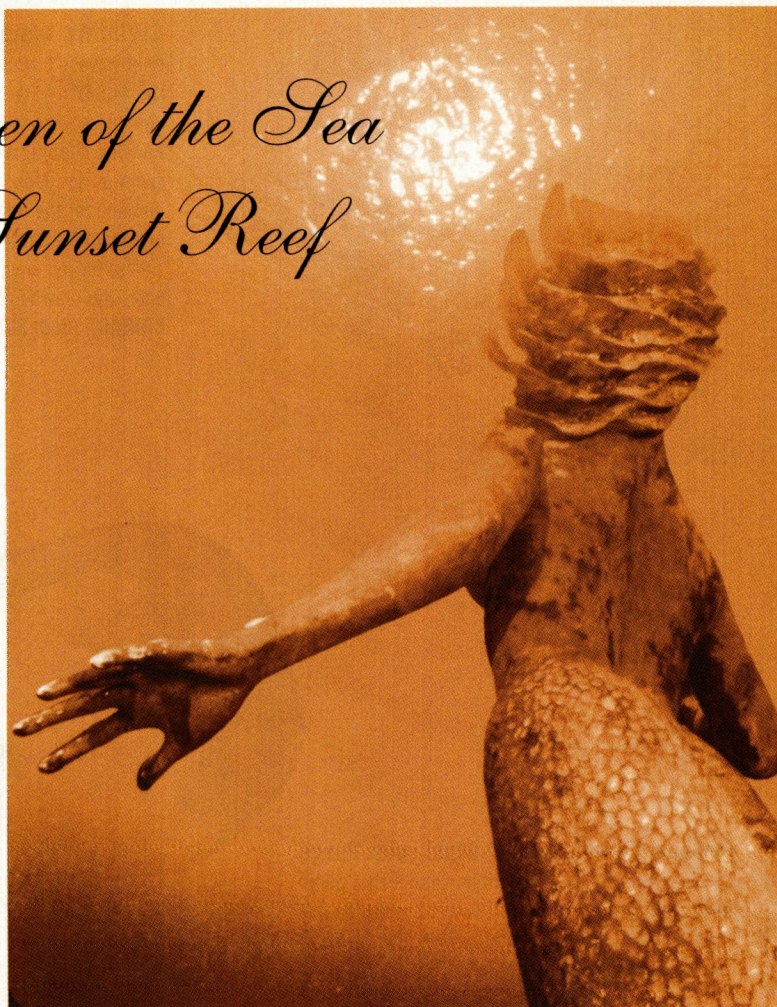
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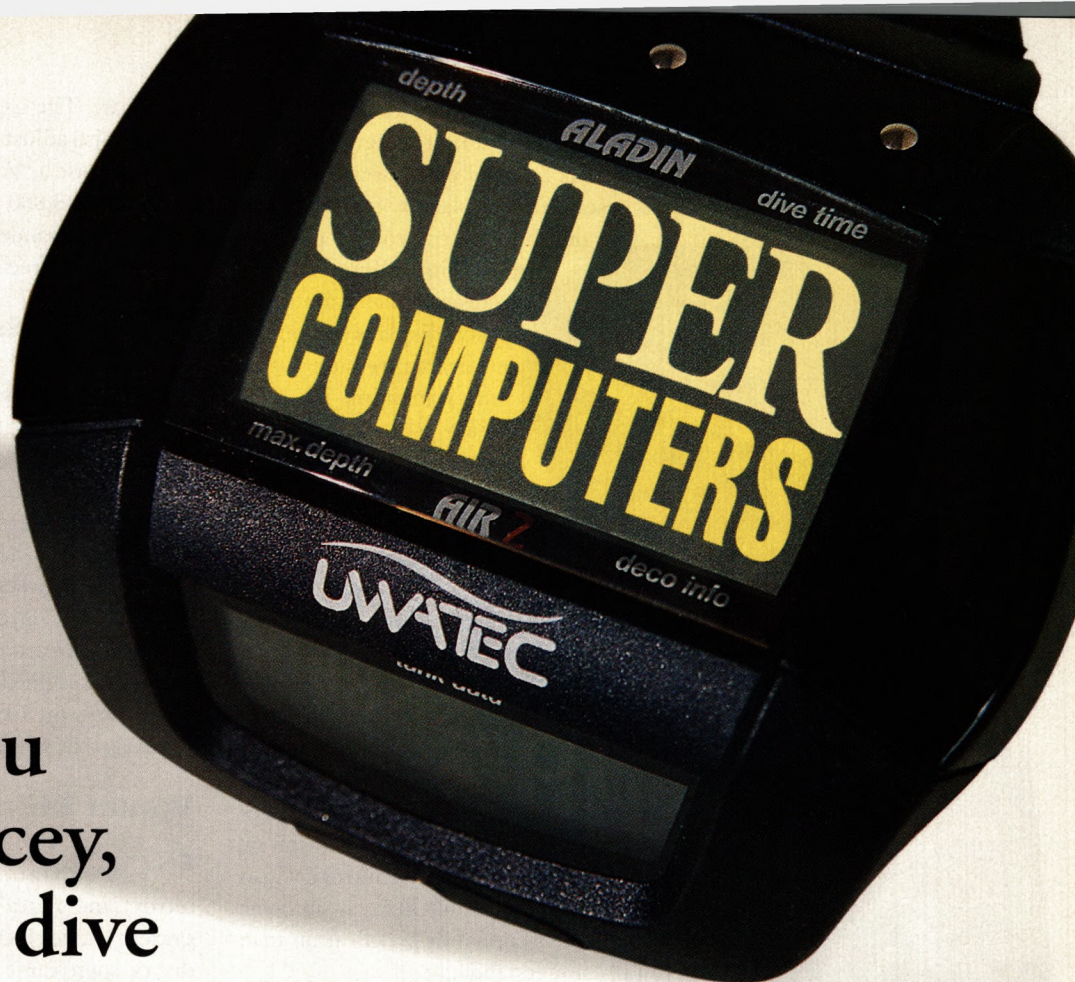
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by Daryl Carson



## Why would you buy a pricey, high-end dive computer? Simple. For the heated leather seats.

**T**hat is to say, choosing a top-shelf computer is about understanding features.

run smoothly, precisely and perform with great reliability. Choosing one over the other, like choosing between a Jag, Mercedes or BMW, is more about pure style and comfort than deciding which will best get you from point A to point B. Getting there isn't the question. *How* you get there is.

As you start strolling the display cases of your

local dive store, you can also more quickly if you decide on three things. Are you going to dive nitrox? Do you want a computer that's air-integrated (possibly hoseless)? Do you prefer push-button controls or metal contacts? Answer yes or no in any combination and you'll still have several models from which to choose. Once you get that out of the way, then you can get down to the really juicy decisions, like: Is a 30-second sampling rate OK for recording dive profiles, or is 15 seconds better?



Consulting the portable brain—it knows your body better than you do.

Like high-end automobiles, dive computers are all going to

narrow down your choices



1

## Customize, Customize

1 The Aerie 500AI is an air-integrated, nitrox unit with a full range of customizable features, such as user-defined alarms for maximum depth or turn-around pressure.

One of its unique features, however, is that it simultaneously displays remaining no-decompression time and remaining air time, which is based on your breathing rate. Some other computers only display the lower of the two numbers on the theory that the threat of the bends or running out of air is an equally compelling reason to ascend. With the Aerie, however, you can see both and plan accordingly.

The 500AI, like all of the high-end models, also comes with software that lets you download your computer's memory into a PC and review dive information. If you want more data, you can crank up the sampling rate and dissect your dives many times a minute, then spit out graphs and charts that reveal nitrogen loading, PO<sub>2</sub> levels and a whole litany of information you'll have to use your certification manuals to fully understand.

## Precision Decision

2 Most life-long divers approach scuba with an attitude of respect and no-nonsense dive planning. They may also dive some fairly advanced profiles. If that's you, consider the **Cochran Gemini+**. Also available in a nitrox version, it packs hefty computing capabilities, such as full decompression ceilings to 190 feet and an overall conservatism factor that can be set by the diver at a value between 0 and 50 percent.

Its nitrox cousin also allows FO<sub>2</sub> and PO<sub>2</sub> settings to be set to 0.10 percent, a feature the truly anal will

appreciate. The Gemini+, similar to other high-end models, also adjusts for altitude. Like most computers, it can use a "zone" method (1,000 to 2,000 feet or 2,000 to 3,000 feet, etc.), however, it can also be set to "seamless" altitude compensation, for slightly more precision.

## Brain Meets Brawn

3 The hoseless air-integrated **Dacor Extreme Access** boasts a list of high-tech functions to rival any competitor: programmable in five languages, permanent memory recalls (greatest depth, total number of dives, etc.), diver-programmable low air alarm and more.

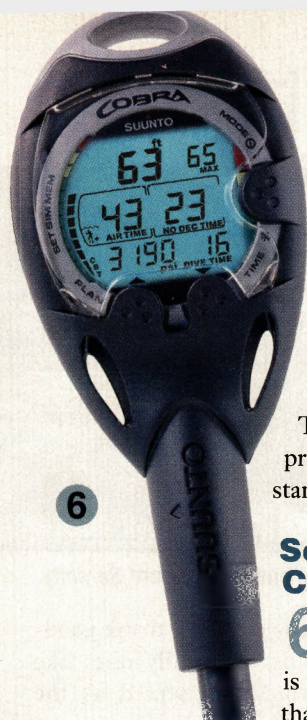
And, while you can get it in a standard wrist-mount configuration, it also comes in a one-of-a-kind Chest Console. It's like being able to haul your Porsche around inside a Humvee. The console is streamlined, rigged to wear a thousand different ways on a BC or harness and has a built-in compass that swivels for use at any angle.

## Visual Efficiency

4&5 The predecessors to **Oceanic's DataMax Pro Plus** (air-integrated, nitrox) and **DataTrans Plus** (hoseless, air-integrated, nitrox) incorporated a function many divers soon came to love: graphical information displays. At a glance, divers could look at a bar graph and tell how close they were to no-decompression limits, oxygen toxicity or running out of air. These, of course, were accompanied by numeric readings. Today, Oceanic continues to push the envelope in display design with the Pro Plus by allowing divers to even customize what numeric information they want to see during the dive. Don't want to clutter up the screen with max depth or total dive time? Take them off. If you change your mind during the dive, push a button to bring them back up.

Oceanic computers also come with some of the most intense and detailed download and logbook software available, as well as a long laundry list of customizable alarms and dive parameters. The DataTrans even offers a feature for those skeptical of hoseless technology.



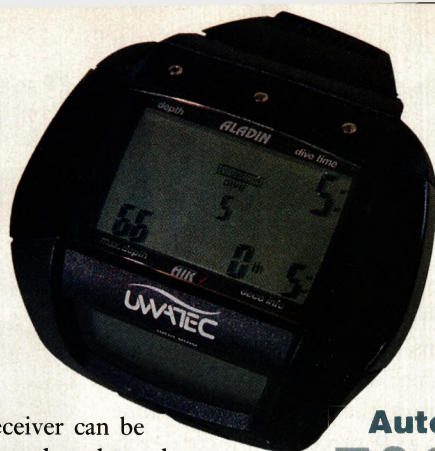


The receiver can be programmed and used as a stand alone full-function computer.

### Schizophrenic Calculator

**6** The **Suunto Cobra**, distributed in the U.S. by Aqua Lung, is an air-integrated dive computer that brings another level of versatility to the field. It is the only air-integrated model with three distinct operating functions: air mode, nitrox mode and gauge mode.

Aimed at the tek-rec crowd, this little marvel is a full-function computer, complete with nitrox capabilities. And, if a tek diver wants to use custom dive tables while breathing trimix or performing gas switches, the Cobra can be put into gauge mode and will not calculate no-deco limits, but simply show depth and dive time. Each of these three functions also has its own dive log. Bookmarks can even be placed in the profile memory to highlight specific moments in the dive. Sampling rates can be changed, as can other features, such as maximum  $P_{O_2}$  settings (1.2 to 1.6 ata) when diving nitrox and custom alarms, which trigger both an audible signal as well as the computer's background illumination.



7

### Auto Pilot

**7&8** It's a given that the **UWATEC** (distributed by SCUBAPRO) Aladin computers are loaded with customizable features. But what's so great about these workhorses is that they can do all the customizing for you. Really.

The **Aladin Air Z Nitrox** is a hoseless air-integrated wonder that tracks air consumption, water temperature, dive history and a host of other factors, then funnels them all into your no-deco time. So, if you're cold, breathing heavily and loaded with nitrogen, the computer will adjust accordingly without you lifting a finger.

This is true of the company's other models, such as the **Aladin Air** (air-integrated, but with a hose). There are some other unique features, however, such as an ascent rate indicator that reads as a percentage. Exceed it and the alarm will flash "120%" or "160%" to let the diver know if he is going slightly faster than he should be or on the fast track to embolism. UWATEC computers are also the only ones discussed in this article that feature "long-life" batteries instead of user-replaceable batteries. Some divers like the security of being able to change their own. Others like that they won't have to worry about it for at least seven years. 🐟



8

| MFG                 | 1<br>AERIS     | 2<br>COCHRAN   | 3<br>DACOR     | 4<br>OCEANIC         | 5<br>OCEANIC | 6<br>SUUNTO    | 7<br>UWATEC    | 8<br>UWATEC |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|
| MODEL               | 500AI          | GEMINI+        | EXTREME ACCESS | PRO PLUS             | DATA TRANS   | COBRA          | AIR Z NITROX   | Aladin AIR  |
| COST (\$)           | 730            | 950            | 975            | 790                  | 950          | 750            | 1250           | 710         |
| COMPARTMENTS        | 12             | 12             | 12             | 12                   | 12           | 9              | 8              | 8           |
| # DIVES/MEMORY      | 255 total      | 500/500        | 12/all         | 12/100+              | 12/25+       | 36hrs.         | 19/37          | 19/37       |
| NITROX VERSION      | YES            | YES            | NO             | YES                  | YES          | YES            | YES            | NO          |
| USER CHANGE BATTERY | YES            | YES            | YES            | YES                  | YES          | YES            | NO             | NO          |
| HOSE OR HOSELESS    | H              | HL             | HL             | H                    | HL           | H              | HL             | H           |
| MAX DEPTH           | 330            | 330+           | 250            | 330                  | 250          | 492            | 330            | 330         |
| WEBSITE (www.)      | diveaeris.com  | mcochran.com   | divedacor.com  | oceanicworldwide.com |              | aqualung.com   | uwatec.com     |             |
| PHONE NUMBER        | (510) 346-0010 | (800) 856-3483 | (203) 852-7079 | (510) 562-0500       |              | (760) 597-5000 | (800) SCUBAPRO |             |

#### Legend:

**Cost:** Manufacturer's Suggested Retail • **Compartments:** Number of theoretical tissue groups used to calculate no-deco limits • **Memory:** Number of dives accessed with computer / Number of dives that can be downloaded to PC • **Nitrox Version:** If a nitrox version is available, cost will be higher • **User Change Battery:** If "no" then batteries typically last many years • **Hose or Hoseless:** Refers only to the model listed, other versions may be available • **Max Depth:** Well, duh...



# A Little Wind in the Hair Helps Save the Reefs

THERE'S A HOLE IN THE HEAVENS that's causing concern. And on June 2, the stars gathered and shone through at a celebrity sailboat race in Marina Del Rey, CA, to benefit the Planetary Coral Reef Foundation (PCRF), an organization dedicated to protecting and preserving the world's threatened coral reefs.

There is a direct link between the health of the world's reefs and global warming associated with the shrinking ozone layer. But this is not the only threat. Over-fishing drastically disturbs ecosystems, especially cyanide and dynamite fishing, which not only kills fish, but destroys the reef itself. In some places, up to 38 percent of the coral reefs have been wiped out in just four years.



Alba, Cameron and crew aboard *Serenity*.

With so many enemies, thank goodness for friends. Especially ones like James Cameron, who served as the

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### Cameron Takes Up the Cause

The Academy Award-winning director of *Titanic* and *The Abyss* has been a diver since 1969 and claims that, "Diving isn't a sport. It's a religion." He remembers diving in a river in Canada, using an old double-hose regulator, while his dad stood on shore, holding a rope that was tied to him.

Cameron first met Abigail Alling, Co-founder and CEO of PCRF, in 1989 at a Mars Society conference.

He later visited the PCRF headquarters in Santa Fe, NM, saying, "They impress me as a group of scientists who are putting themselves on the line to protect and understand Earth's ecosystems."

Alling shared stories of the adventures of the RV *Heraclitus* and Cameron became fascinated by this group of people committed to the cause of saving the oceans.

He decided to push back his own film projects in order to focus on the oceans, and pledged to do whatever he can as a filmmaker to help their cause. In March, he visited the *Heraclitus* with Jean-Michel Cousteau. The two are teaming up to make a TV series called "Ocean Challenge" and 3-D IMAX films, hoping to empower others to make a difference and share in their enthusiasm and concern for the oceans.







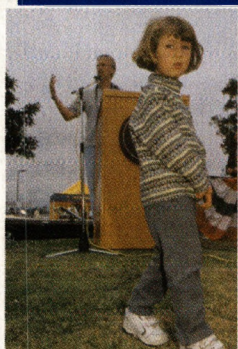
Above: Bill Paxton proved adept during the morning training session. Right: Gary Busey cheered on the competitors from a motorized skiff, with a barking Labrador perched on the bow.



Honorary Chairman for the Celebrity Sail, of which *Skin Diver* was a media sponsor.

Prior to the sailboat race, Cameron took the podium, encouraging people to get involved, to educate themselves and play a part by voting, paying attention to legislation, etc. He commended the PCRF for having a sound plan—to

Cynthia Lazaroff, the PCRF's Executive VP,



says she got involved because, "I can't imagine leaving a world without coral reefs to my daughter [MacKenzie]."

launch a satellite sensor into space, enabling them to make

the first map of coral reefs and monitor change in real time, with their research vessel, RV *Heracitus*, serving as the ground troop. The result, they hope, will be to bring quantifiable and understandable information on the status of the world's coral reefs to the general public.

Cameron then rallied the crowd and gave the disclaimer, "I am not in any way a sailor. I have never sailed in my life," with hopes that the race would be a measure of his dedication to the cause. Of course, his boat won.

He was in good company, joined by Billy Zane, Frances Fisher and Bill Paxton (*Titanic*); Jessica Alba and Michael Wetherly (*"Dark Angel"*); Billy Campbell (*"Once and Again"*);

Tom Arnold; Gary Busey; Dennis Weaver ("Gunsmoke" and *Lonesome Dove*); Sharon Lawrence; Maria Shriver; and others.

Afterward, Cameron hosted a party aboard his 97-foot "luxury diving boat" (rather than a yacht), the *Sojourner*, where the trophy quickly made itself at home on the bar counter.

In response to the event, the PCRF has been swamped with phone calls,

including interest in co-projects and museum exhibits. They feel that they have put the coral reef crisis on the map and are ecstatic to have raised enough money to dry dock the *Heracitus* for much-needed maintenance. They are now discussing whether or not this will become an annual event. 🐟

—Ryan Allen

For more information, visit [www.pcrf.org](http://www.pcrf.org).

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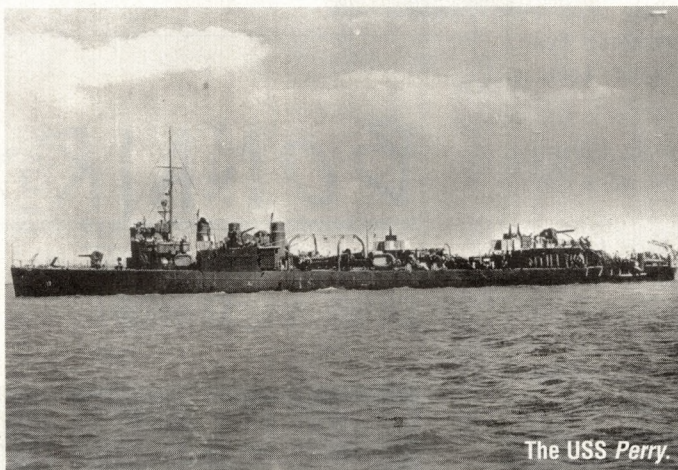
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# Expedition: USS *Perry*

by Ty Sawyer

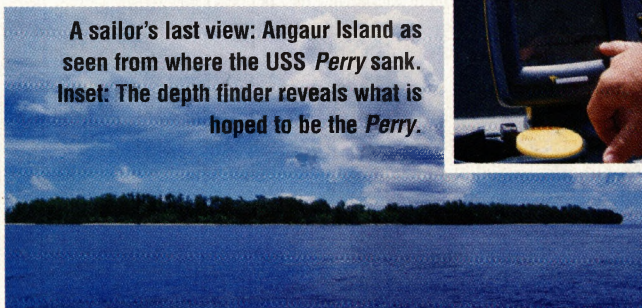
**THE STORY OF A  
WW II VETERAN'S  
FINAL VICTORY—  
RETURNING TO  
THE FIELD OF  
BATTLE TO FIND  
HIS LOST SHIP.**



The USS *Perry*.

Divers had been searching for the sunken remains of the USS *Perry* in the waters off Palau for years. Thousands of dollars had been spent trying to determine its final resting place. But it took a 78-year-old survivor of the sinking named Larry Tunks, inspired by Tom Brokaw's book, *The Greatest Generation*, to find it. Brokaw's book is a collection of tales of bravery, heroism and personal accounts of courage and loss from the soldiers and sailors of World War II. After fighting to save democracy, those who survived returned home, trying to put the war

**A sailor's last view: Angaur Island as seen from where the USS *Perry* sank. Inset: The depth finder reveals what is hoped to be the *Perry*.**



behind them so that they could live their lives as normally as possible. But ultimately, they helped change the face of the planet by using what they had learned, without dwelling on what they had lost. After reading Brokaw's book, Tunks felt a renewed understanding of what his generation did during WW II, and what it meant for all who participated, both at home and abroad. He then spent two years pouring over official Navy action reports, minesweeping maps and the documented posi-

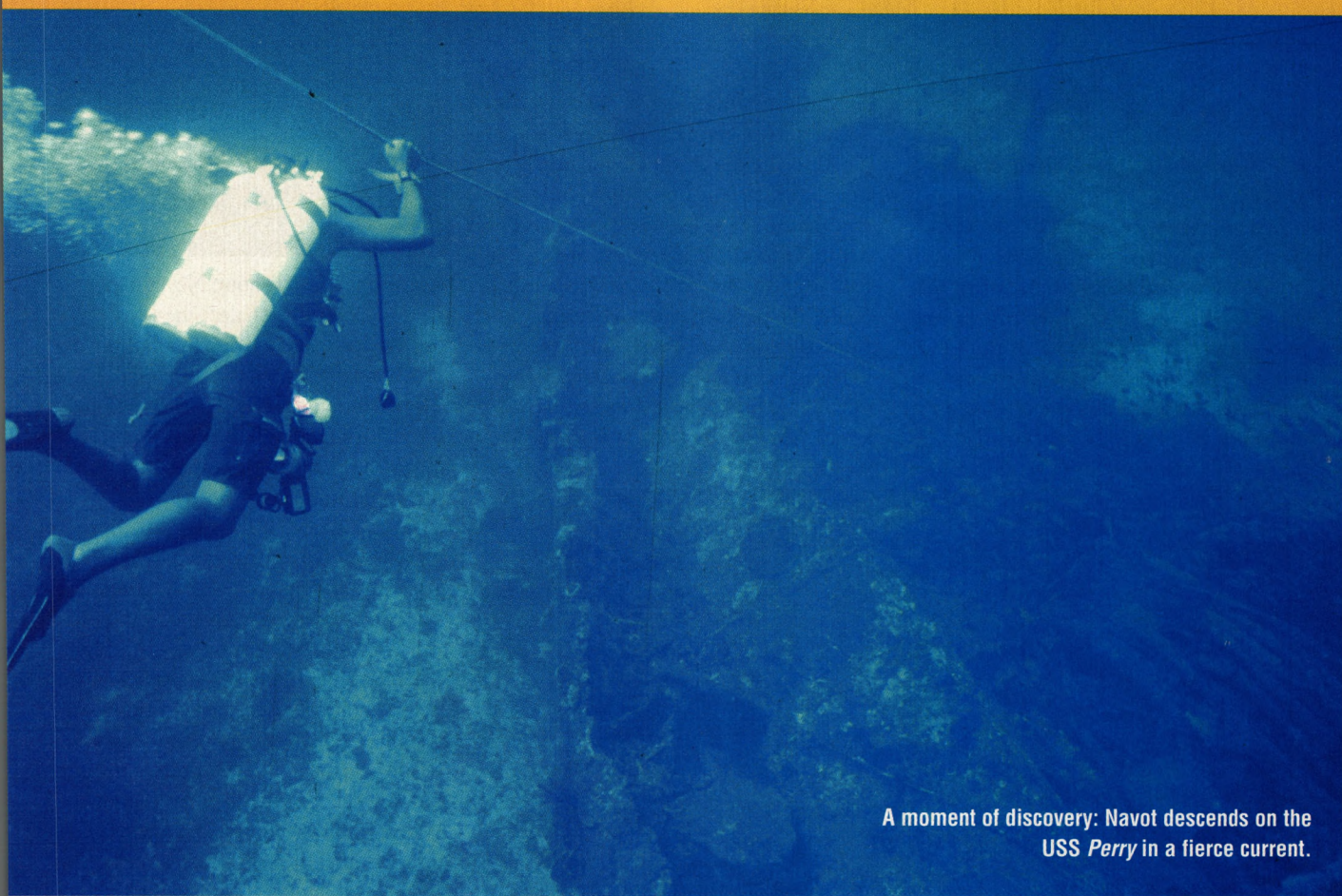
tion of the sinking, determined to find his ship, for himself and his shipmates. And he saved his money. For this was a trip of a lifetime, and he knew he'd only have one chance at success. Four days (to be exact) to plan, execute a search and find his ship. Finally, he felt confident enough to try and, with the help of three of his fishing buddies, ready. He then made a call to Navot Bornovski of Fish 'n Fins dive shop.

Navot knew the story. Everyone on Palau did. Expeditions had come before, the phone calls had come before, all from people certain they knew the ship's whereabouts, people whose job it was to find ships. But this phone call felt different. Tunks had knowledge no one else did: memory. He had stood on the deck, heard the cries of his shipmates and, after three years without liberty, abandoned ship.

Navot said he would help.

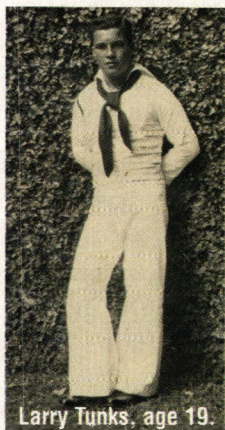
On September 13, 1944, the high-speed minesweeper USS *Perry* (DMS-17) was conducting sweeping operations in the waters off Angaur Island, Palau, in preparation for Operation Desecrate 1, which would occur two days later. Second Class Bosun Mate Larry Tunks, 24 years old, was manning the three-inch guns. Sniper bullets, though no real threat with the ship 700 yards offshore, crackled from the heavily-jungled shoreline. For three years Tunks had called the ship home. During his enlistment, the *Perry* had escorted the ill-fated USS *Arizona* to Pearl Harbor, and somehow escaped sinking during the Japanese sneak attack on December 7, 1941. He had seen action in Rota, witnessed the bloody massacre at Suicide Cliff on Saipan, escorted troopships to Guadalcanal, protected



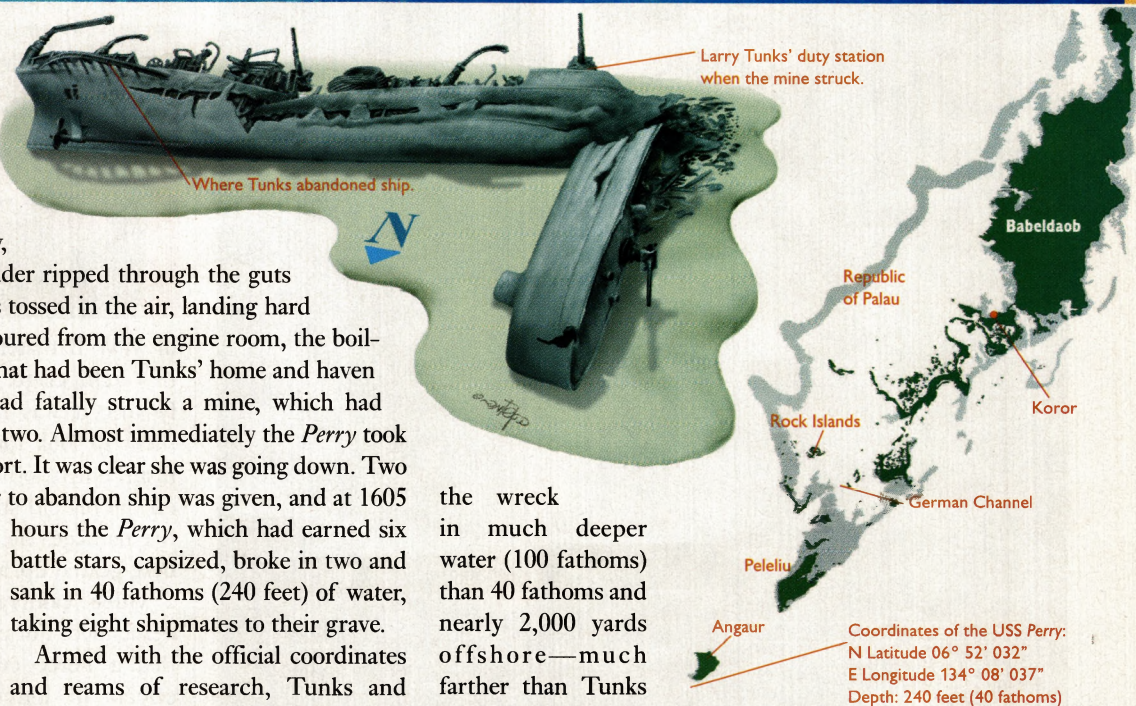


A moment of discovery: Navot descends on the USS *Perry* in a fierce current.

transports in the Philippine Sea and swept the waters prior to the assault on Aitape, New Guinea. At 1418 hours on this day, though, a violent shudder ripped through the guts of the ship. Tunks was tossed in the air, landing hard on the deck. Smoke poured from the engine room, the boiler silenced. The ship that had been Tunks' home and haven throughout the war had fatally struck a mine, which had nearly torn the ship in two. Almost immediately the *Perry* took on a 30 degree list to port. It was clear she was going down. Two minutes later the order to abandon ship was given, and at 1605 hours the *Perry*, which had earned six battle stars, capsized, broke in two and sank in 40 fathoms (240 feet) of water, taking eight shipmates to their grave.



Larry Tunks, age 19.



the wreck in much deeper water (100 fathoms) than 40 fathoms and nearly 2,000 yards offshore—much farther than Tunks had re-membered.

The original position was determined by sextant, which was hardly as accurate as today's GPS systems. But depth soundings were generally correct. So, Navot took Tunks' information and decided to look closer to the island. He formed a search triangle three miles long by 500 yards wide along the 40-fathom depth contour and made plans to try to find the *Perry* on May 1, 2000, the day before Tunks' 78th birthday. Navot enlisted



## Expedition: **USS Perry**

Jeff Wonnenberg, one of his divemasters, to assist.

When the team reached the search area, it was Tunks' first sight of Angaur since he was plucked from its surrounding waters. Gone were the snipers, the mines and the lines drawn in the sand, but the memory of the place was as indelible as when he first laid eyes on it 56 years before. He was positive the

*Perry* was closer to shore. Following Tunks' instincts as a soldier and Navot's as a seaman, the crew stayed glued to the depth finder for nearly an hour, when the monitor suddenly revealed a shape on the seafloor. The depth readout beamed at them: 240 feet, 40 fathoms exactly. It was all they could do to keep from cheering, but they still hadn't really found anything.

Navot, who'd located dozens of shipwrecks, was skeptical. Finding a shipwreck lost for 56 years was never this

## D-Log

D-Log is a high-quality, fully interactive diver's logbook. The 3-D rendering of the *Perry* was taken from it. Both a hard copy version and more dynamic personal web version of the logbook are available.

For more information, go to [www.d-log.com](http://www.d-log.com).

easy. First try, first hour. Never happens.

"It's probably shale," he said. "I'll drop a wreck anchor, and if it holds we'll take a look."

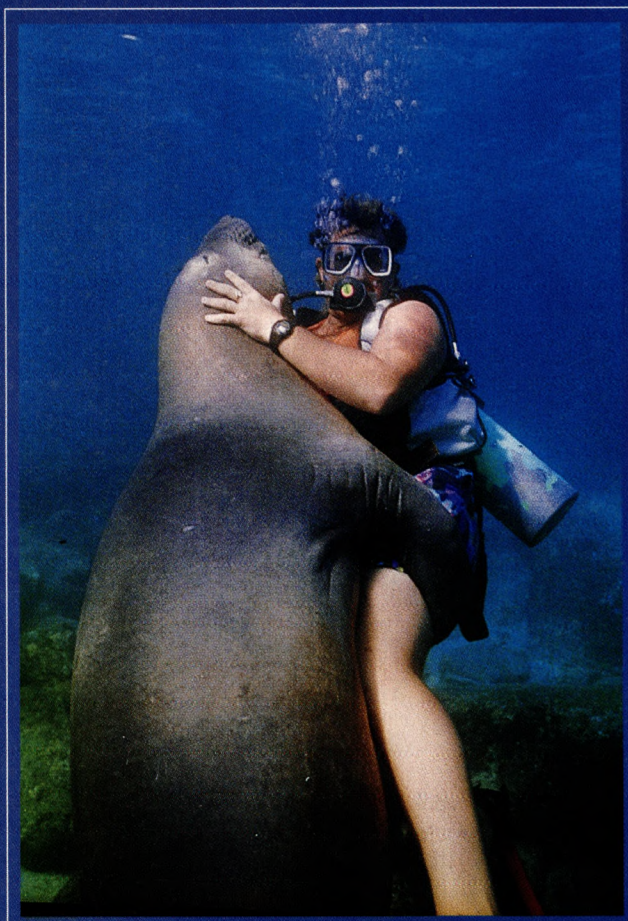
He dropped a wreck anchor and held on to the line as it descended. It dragged along the seafloor toward the bump on the depth finder.

"If it's shale, it'll break off easily," Navot was explaining when *Wham!* the anchor dug in and he was dragged over the rail, splashing into the water in a world-class, head-over-heels tumble.

"That's definitely not shale!" beamed Navot, as he climbed back on the boat.

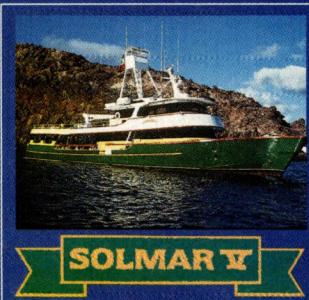
While Tunks and Wonnenberg waited on the boat, Navot geared up and did a quick bounce dive on the object. When he broke the surface just a few minutes later, he said it was wreckage of some kind. Tunks, aware of the amount

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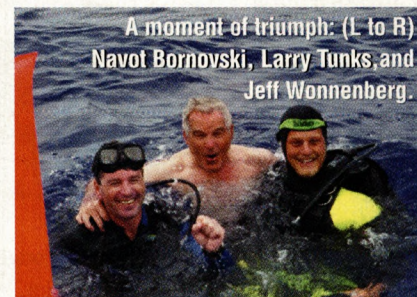
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A moment of triumph: (L to R)  
Navot Bornovski, Larry Tunks, and  
Jeff Wonnenberg.

Photo/Courtesy Navot Bornovski

of WW II material on the seafloor off this archipelago, wanted to be absolutely sure it was the *Perry*. Tunks told them to look for the sweeper mechanism, davits, other gear known to exist on the his old ship and the location of the damage. So, Navot and Wonnenberg geared up, armed themselves with a video camera and doubles, then descended. For eight minutes they battled a fierce current and the loopy effects of narcosis, but when they returned to the surface their smiles were all Tunks needed to see. They had found the *Perry*. His ship and his history were no longer lost at sea.

Overjoyed, tearful and for the second time in his life, Second Class Bosun's Mate (retired) Larry Tunks, jumped off the deck into Palauan waters. 🐟



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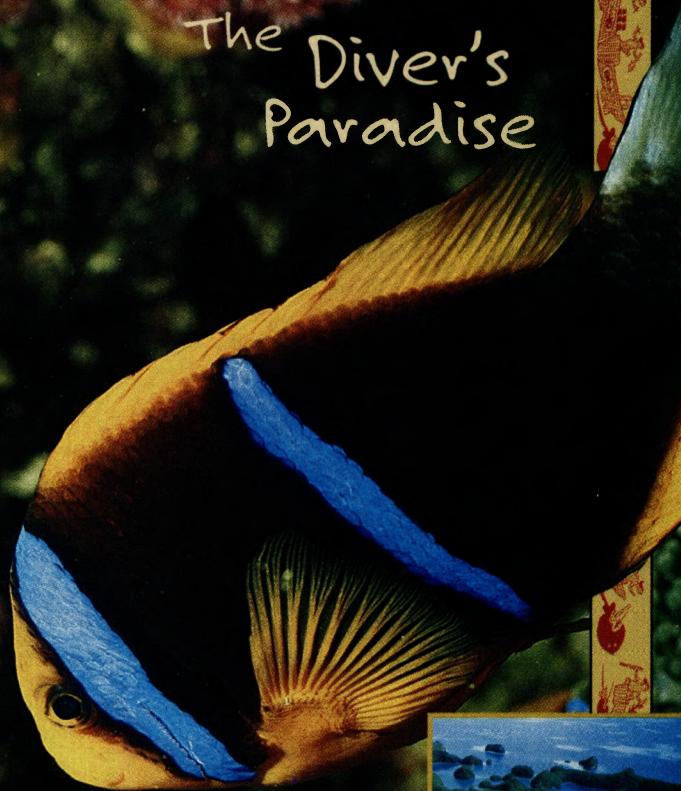
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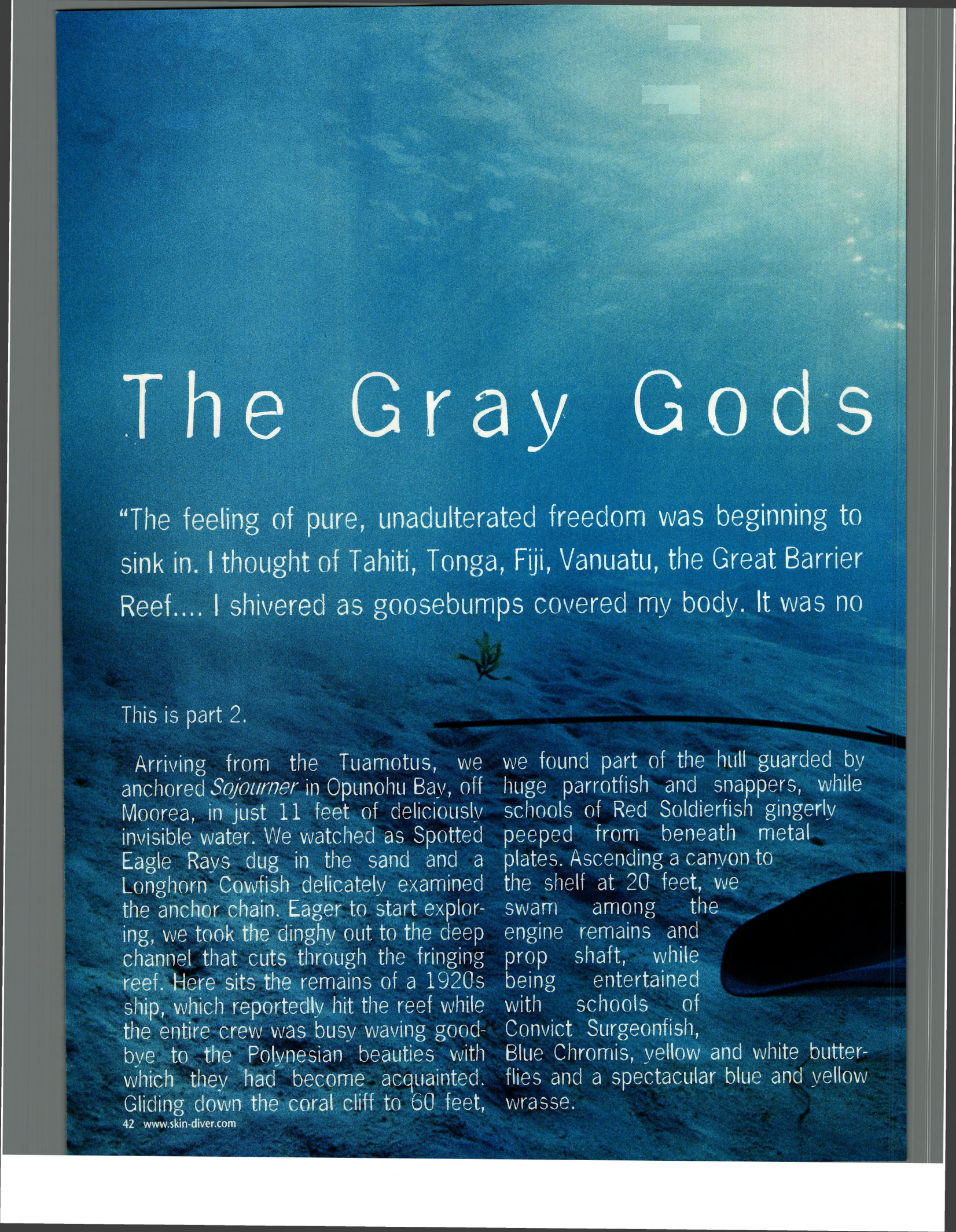
E-mail: [mail@worldofdive.com](mailto:mail@worldofdive.com)  
[www.worldofdive.com](http://www.worldofdive.com)

# Palau

The Diver's  
Paradise





The background of the entire page is an underwater photograph. It shows a deep blue water column with some light rays filtering down. The bottom is sandy and uneven, with a small, dark green plant growing out of it in the center. A dark, curved object, possibly a piece of wreckage or a diver's fin, is visible in the lower right corner.

# The Gray Gods

"The feeling of pure, unadulterated freedom was beginning to sink in. I thought of Tahiti, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, the Great Barrier Reef.... I shivered as goosebumps covered my body. It was no

This is part 2.

Arriving from the Tuamotus, we anchored *Sojourner* in Opunohu Bay, off Moorea, in just 11 feet of deliciously invisible water. We watched as Spotted Eagle Rays dug in the sand and a Longhorn Cowfish delicately examined the anchor chain. Eager to start exploring, we took the dinghy out to the deep channel that cuts through the fringing reef. Here sits the remains of a 1920s ship, which reportedly hit the reef while the entire crew was busy waving goodbye to the Polynesian beauties with which they had become acquainted. Gliding down the coral cliff to 60 feet,

we found part of the hull guarded by huge parrotfish and snappers, while schools of Red Soldierfish gingerly peeped from beneath metal plates. Ascending a canyon to the shelf at 20 feet, we swam among the engine remains and prop shaft, while being entertained with schools of Convict Surgeonfish, Blue Chromis, yellow and white butterflies and a spectacular blue and yellow wrasse.



# of Tiki

longer a dream, it was happening, we were wanderers following the wind with a boat..."

—from "Around the World with Steve, Part 1"

Text & Photography by  
Steve Alexander

Like a flying carpet, a stingray glides over the sand in Moorea's magical lagoon.



Early the next day we headed to a site just outside Taotoi Pass, where I'd seen several dive boats stopping. Needing some fish shots, I had prepared a plastic container with holes, and stuffed it with Bonito scraps and blood. We should have known something was up when about 10 reef sharks began circling the dinghy before we even got wet.

As we descended to 60 feet, 10 to 12 Blacktips and Grays began circling, slowly closing the distance. We stopped at a spot in the rubble where we could safely kneel. Within minutes the sharks had closed their circle to about five feet, and were moving fast and becoming agitated. Jen, my wife, navigator, crew and constant companion on this journey, looked past me with eyes the size of dinner plates at the scene unfolding. Suddenly, a single Gray shot with a stiff jerky motion on a tangent toward us, passing two feet behind Jen's head. Instantly several others kicked their tails and became gray streaks through the water with rapid, twitchy movements. Realizing we were in over our heads, I decided to diffuse the situation by taking the bait back to the boat. Within minutes of disposing of the Bonito, the sharks gave us some breathing

room. Later, we were to learn that this was once a shark-feeding site and Bonito blood, in particular, drives them crazy.

Back on the boat, we decided that before we lost some appendages it was time to talk with the locals. So we headed to Bathy's Club at the Beachcomber Parkroyal Hotel.

Jen and I were soon loading our gear onto one of Bathy's aluminum boats and flying across the glassy water to the Tiki site—an action-packed, but more controlled, shark dive at the very western tip of Moorea.

Descending the anchor line into the moderate current and amazing visibility, we made our way to the site escorted by thousands of Bluestripe Snappers, butterflyfish, Bignose Unicornfish and Tuamotu Emperors. In the background, perhaps a hundred or



A Tiki statue adds a mystical element to this inner lagoon dive.



more Blacktip and Gray Reef Sharks were patiently circling, waiting their turn. Franck, the chief shark-feeder, descended last, completely enveloped by a school of snappers. Setting up about 15 feet from a group of divers poised for the show, he pulled out a four-foot Dorado and the sharks quickly closed the distance. I moved in, inches from the bait for a good angle. Using a chain-mail glove, Franck waved bait in the water and the snappers undulated with it as if attached. Suddenly they parted, and the void was instantaneously filled with a thrashing Gray Reef Shark. With a frantic sawing motion, it tore off a six-inch chunk of flesh, and bolted from the scene like a burglar, running into my Aquatica camera housing. Its teeth hit the dome port, leaving an expensive gouge in the lexan.

We did many dives at Tiki, each one more exciting than the last as we began to understand shark behavior. Between dives we'd off-gas in the lagoon by snorkeling with the 20 or more huge stingrays, which Jen came to know individually. She'd often take my favorite

sardines in tomato sauce, sneak off in the dinghy and treat the rays to a culinary delight. They'd gently slide up her torso and out of the water, wings undulating, bony mouths gasping and spurting water, demanding food. Sometimes their bulk would knock her over, and she'd fall, laughing, below the surface and be covered by a mass of flapping wings.

A month passed. The diving continued to get even better. We'd see 300-pound Napoleon Wrasse, monster morays, Green Sea Turtles and Pilot Whales as I burned through Velvia film at an absurd rate. One day I found myself following a turtle over fields of giant Montipora "roses," some 12 feet in diameter, and a few hours later we were mesmerized by a shoal of Spotted Eagle Rays in "Eagle Ray channel." As the afternoon squalls brewed amidst the peaks, spectacular rainbows would arc across Opunohu Bay, and we'd watch the sun explode in the west as we floated on a lagoon of glass. In the mornings I'd

dive from our deck and photograph







Ready, set, go! A trio of Blacktip Reef Sharks in perfect formation.



*Sojourner* anchored in the mirror-like lagoon near Opunohu Bay.

## Skin Diver GUIDE • T A H I T I

**GETTING THERE:** A number of airlines fly to French Polynesia: Quantas, Air New Zealand, Air France, Aircalin, Corsair and AOM. Lan Chile provides access from South America and Hawaiian Air flies between Honolulu and Tahiti once a week.

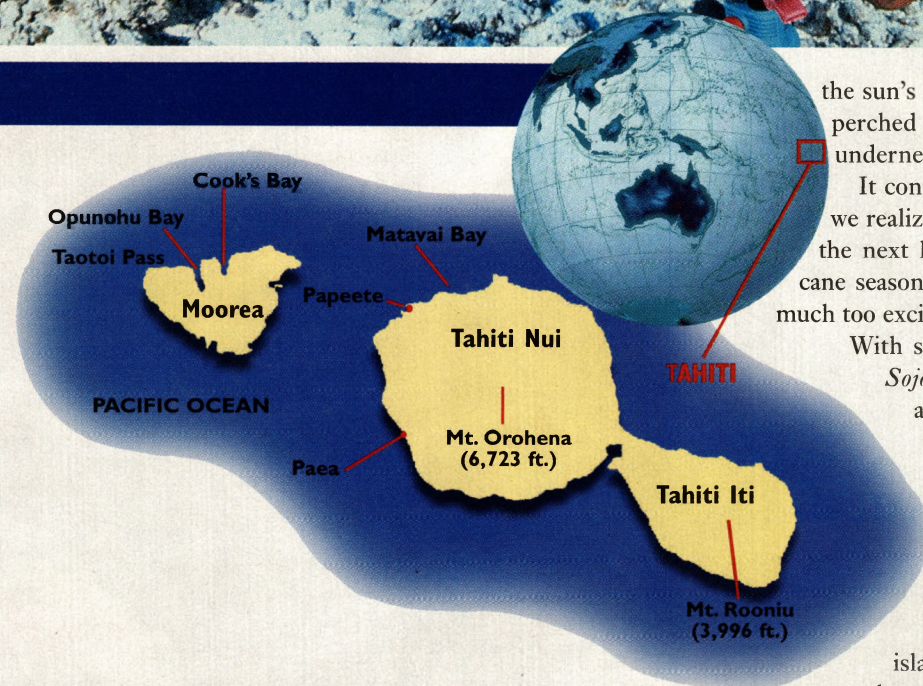
**TAHITI AND MOOREA, FRENCH POLYNESIA, FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit:** Any time of the year. There is slightly less rain from May to October, but this should not strongly influence plans. The visibility is always good, but is slightly better from May to October. Overall, the best diving is from April to November, when the water is about 5°F warmer. **Topside Climate:** Although there are two seasons—the slightly warmer and more humid period between November and March, and the cooler season between May and October—the difference is minimal. In reality, Tahiti and Moorea are kept relatively cool by constant tradewinds, so most of the year is pleasant. Temperatures range 80 to 95°F from November to April, and 70 to 85°F May to October. **Water Temperature:** Average temperatures are 79°F in the winter and 84°F during summer. There's virtually no thermocline; only 1°F difference between the surface and 150 feet. A 2 to 3 mm shorty or lycra suit is fine year-round. • **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 140 (XPF). USD is easily accepted. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time minus 5 hours.

**Dive Operators: Tahiti:** Aquatica Dive Center (at Tahiti Beachcomber Inter-Continental) (011) 689-53-3496 [www.aquat-ica-dive.com](http://www.aquat-ica-dive.com) • ITI Diving International (011) 689-57-7793 [www.itidiving.pf](http://www.itidiving.pf) • Tahiti Plongee (011) 689-41-0062 e-mail: [plongee.tahiti@mail.pf](mailto:plongee.tahiti@mail.pf) **Moorea:** Archipels Croisieres (Live-aboard based in Moorea; dive cruises to Tuamotu Archipelago) (011) 689-56-3639 [www.archipels.com](http://www.archipels.com) • Bathy's Club (at Moorea Beachcomber Inter-Continental Hotel) (011) 689-56-3144 [www.diveguide.com/p2860.htm](http://www.diveguide.com/p2860.htm) • Moorea Fun Dive (011) 689-56-4038 [www.fundive.pf](http://www.fundive.pf) • Scubapiti (011) 689-56-2038 [www.scubapiti.com](http://www.scubapiti.com) • Top Dive Moorea (at Sheraton Moorea Lagoon Resort & Spa) (011) 689-56-1111 [www.topdive.com](http://www.topdive.com)

**Resorts: Tahiti:** Le Meridien Hotel Tahiti (011) 689-47-0707 [www.lemeridien-tahiti.com](http://www.lemeridien-tahiti.com) • Le Royal Tahitien (011) 689-50-4040 e-mail: [royalres@mail.pf](mailto:royalres@mail.pf) • Sheraton Hotel Tahiti (011) 689-86-4848 [www.sheraton.com](http://www.sheraton.com) • Sofitel Coralie Maeva Beach (011) 689-86-6600 e-mail: [H0547@accor-hotels.com](mailto:H0547@accor-hotels.com) • Tahiti Beachcomber Inter-Continental (011) 689-86-5110 [www.tahiti-resorts.com](http://www.tahiti-resorts.com) **Moorea:** Bali Hai Hotels [www.balihazhotels.com](http://www.balihazhotels.com) • Club Med Moorea (888) 932-2582 [www.clubmed.com](http://www.clubmed.com) • Hotel Hibiscus (011) 689-56-1220 [www.hotel-hibiscus.pf](http://www.hotel-hibiscus.pf) • Moorea Beachcomber Inter-Continental (011) 689-55-1919 [www.tahiti-resorts.com](http://www.tahiti-resorts.com) • Sheraton Moorea Lagoon Resort & Spa (011) 689-55-1111 [www.sheraton.com](http://www.sheraton.com) • Sofitel Coralie la Ora Moorea (011) 689-55-0355 e-mail: [H0547@accor-hotels.com](mailto:H0547@accor-hotels.com)



Underwater cameraman, William, a Moorea local, bursts with the national exuberance.



the sun's rays waking the Tiki god statues perched on the lagoon floor, virtually underneath *Sojourner*.

It continued late into September, until we realized that we could no longer make the next leg, New Zealand, before hurricane season. Besides, the South Pacific was much too exciting to explore in only one year.

With sadness we threw a big party on *Sojourner* to thank our dear friends at Bathy's for the incredible underwater experiences, and turned *Sojourner* southwest, toward the leeward islands. A new chapter was beginning in our "World Oceans" journey. We'd traced a meandering line 6,057 miles through nine islands, and we were different people with different values. No longer did I dream of a house or Porsche; I'd drift to sleep wondering if we'd ever swim with a Great White, play with a Humpback Whale, watch turtles hatching, or if our line would ever circle the globe. Life was no longer a desperate rush, it simply happened, just as long as we kept dreaming.

*Special thanks to Bathy's Club.*

**Dive Tour Operators in the U.S.:** *Inta-Tahiti* (800) 531-9222 [www.inta-tahiti.com](http://www.inta-tahiti.com) • *Sportours* (800) 660-2754 [www.sportours.com](http://www.sportours.com) • *Tahiti Vacations* (800) 553-3477 [www.tahiti-vacations.net](http://www.tahiti-vacations.net) • *World of Diving* (800) 900-7657 [www.worldofdiving.com](http://www.worldofdiving.com)

**RESOURCES:** *Tahiti Dive Association* [www.diving-tahiti.com](http://www.diving-tahiti.com) • *Tahiti Tourism North America* (310) 414-8484 [www.gototahiti.com](http://www.gototahiti.com) • *Tahiti Explorer Guide* [www.tahiti-explorer.com](http://www.tahiti-explorer.com) • *Lonely Planet Books* [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com) • *Moon Handbooks* [www.moon.com](http://www.moon.com) • *Skin Diver Online* [www.skin-diver.com](http://www.skin-diver.com)



Cozumel's fiesta-like atmosphere spills over into lush reefs of reds, oranges, blues and greens.





# advanced ADVENTURES in COZUMEL

**O**ur party of four is relaxing around the table after a seafood dinner at Capi Nevegante, watching the headwaiter prepare Mayan coffee. He crystallizes sugar on the rims of glass coffee cups by rolling the cups expertly in the flame of an alcohol burner.

A few blocks west, in the larger restaurants closer to the waterfront, banquet-size tables of newly certified divers are singing “Guantanamara,” off-key and getting photographed in big, floppy prop sombreros. And that’s fun. But that isn’t how it is at Capi Nevegante; it’s one of those places frequented primarily by people who’ve been coming to Cozumel for years or by middle-aged locals. The atmosphere is, as they say here, *muy tranquilo*.

The headwaiter is pouring flaming streams of liqueur into the cups, now. And that’s when my wife catches me sneaking a peak at my watch. Leaning close, she whispers, “Let me guess. You’re thinking that the sooner we get back to the hotel, the sooner you can get to bed, and then, the next thing you know, you’ll be waking up and it’ll be time to go diving again. Am I right?”

Sheepishly, I admit that she is. And I try to remember if I’ve ever felt this way before.

I have. When I was six years old. And it was the night before Christmas.

## Coming Out Party

Poll the divers waiting for their dive boat on any pier in Cozumel and, chances are, you’ll discover that a significant number are on their first dive vacation. There’s a reason for that.

Cozumel lies 12 miles off the Yucatan Peninsula and is washed by the Guiana Current, bringing consistently warm and spectacularly clear water, as well as a constant stream of nutrients to nourish the lower end of the food chain. Cozumel hosts perfect conditions for even entry-level

**Trade the tequila and techno for a fine liqueur and a classic mariachi band, then discover the Cozumel that’s all grown-up.**



**Above:** Diver explores the newly sunken wreck of the C-53. **Bottom left:** Speedy boats make short runs to Cozumel’s dive sites. **Bottom right:** An Orange Ball Corallimorph.

divers: Just about every dive is an easy drift dive; waves and chop are usually minimal; and visibility is typically better than 100 feet (nudging 200 during prolonged periods of calm weather).

That’s wonderful for the people with the paper C-cards. But what about divers who’ve been in more saltwater than a kosher dill pickle?

One word: plenty.



**Text by Tom Morrissey**  
**Photography by Jay Ireland**  
**and Georgienne Bradley**



A Spotted Eagle Ray in mid-flight.



My first morning in Cozumel found me walking over to the dock at Costa Club's beach, just across the street from the hotel. My wife and daughter are happy, having discovered that the clean, fully appointed resort has a pool of Disney-esque proportions. When my boat comes in, there are only five other divers on board, shepherded by a dive-master named Goya—a short, muscular, Mayan fireplug from Merida who has, I will later learn, been divemastering on Cozumel for 15 years. It's obvious he lifts weights; when I comment on his condition, he reveals that he neither drinks nor smokes so he can remain in peak condition for his job. I ask him where we're going, and he immediately replies, "What would you like?"

"Palancar," I tell him, Cozumel's most famous reef. He muses aloud that we might try for a particular section, the Caves, then gets on the radio and compares notes with colleagues. There's

competition creates an atmosphere in which operators are anxious to please, and the most successful ones are highly customer-driven.

### Clear Difference

Even before we start our descent, it's obvious that all the talk about Cozumel's visibility is much more than hype. From more than 80 feet away, details stand out on the reef as if we are viewing them through air. And the area had rain the evening before—the viz is usually better. We descend through ravines, cuts and valleys, then follow a labyrinth thick with healthy corals, with French and Queen Angelfish at every turn. Coming up out of one cleft in the reef, we spot a Loggerhead Turtle, the first of four that we will see on this dive.

That gives us lots to talk about as we lunch on sandwiches, fresh bananas, oranges and soft drinks during the surface interval. After lunch, Goya asks

me what I'll want to dive later on in the week, and I tell him that I'm interested in the more distant sites and, as I'm interested in large marine life, I would like to hit them early in the morning. Nodding, he replies, "You might want to dive one of the fast boats."

I think about this as we make our

### GOING UNDERGROUND

For the jaded world dive traveler, Cozumel holds a great enticement—cave diving. Not the tunnels of the reef, but the real enter-through-a-cenote, bring-your-lights-and-reels, Full-Cave-card required deal. I'd heard of the three primary systems that run under the island and contacted German Yanez Mendoza, owner of Yucatech Expeditions, who, after inspecting both my cave card and my logbook, kindly invited me to tag along on one of his Full Cave classes.

We visited the upstream side of *Sistema Paraíso* (Paradise System) and entered through a small sinkhole popular as a late-night party spot with the local teens. There's none of the decoration common in caves on the mainland. This system is ironshore-ish karst. Our bubbles knocked loose a variety of sightless, albino cave creatures—tiny shrimp and little worm-like animals. I spotted a centipede-like creature only a fraction of an inch long, and German would later tell me that what I've seen is a ramipede—an extremely rare cave-dwelling invertebrate.

second dive, on Yocab Reef. We see three more turtles. I begin to wonder—do I want to take a fast boat in the morning? It doesn't seem like things can get any better than this.

### Grad School

That evening, "Apple"—owner of Dive Paradise, agreed that I might want to try their EDP (Experienced Diver Program), which uses a fleet of five smaller, twin-engine "fast boats."

### THE ART OF LOWERING THE PRICE

Bargaining is permitted in most shops, although most Americans fail to grasp the subtlety of the art. Rather than haggling, simply admire what it is you're after and let the merchant name successively lower prices until he hits one that's palatable to you. For a really expensive item (such as a matched set of jewelry), it's not a bad idea to simply stop in and look every night as you walk off your dinner (most shops are open until at least 9:00 PM on weeknights). The price will almost certainly drop on each visit, and you will make a friend of the merchant, rather than insulting him. Comparing notes with divemates showed that this method consistently got the same results as the getting-flustered-and-haggling route.



### DOLPHIN DISCOVERY

For a once-in-a-lifetime thrill, consider a visit to Chankanaab National Marine Park to interact with Bottlenose Dolphins. Half a dozen animals live in a massive ocean pen (about 35 feet deep), and the Dolphin Discovery program allows divers to swim with, pet and play with these amazing creatures. Kids programs are available, too, where younger ocean lovers can receive a dolphin hug or kiss and swim with the dolphins.

Just minutes away from downtown, the Park is also a great place to go snorkeling, features incredible botanical gardens, an archeological trail and museum and a fabulous beach.

For more information, call (011) 52-98-494757 or visit [www.dolphin-discovery.com](http://www.dolphin-discovery.com).





# Skin Diver GUIDE • COZUMEL •



**GETTING THERE:** AeroMexico ([www.aeromexico.com](http://www.aeromexico.com)) flies directly to Cozumel from Atlanta, a major hub for a number of U.S. airlines. With its bilingual aircrews and hospitality, AeroMexico is well worth traveling—it's like starting your Cozumel vacation in the air.

## COZUMEL FACTS & TIPS:

**Best Time To Visit:** Most American divers visit Cozumel during the dry season—late October through early May—as this virtually guarantees that your trip will miss the tropical storm season.

Peak tourist season is December to April. But Cozumel is a four-season destination.

and stellar diving can be enjoyed here year-round. **Topside Climate:** The temperature averages 80°F. Cozumel is tropical and generally dry, with summer rains from June through September. But most rain comes in typical tropical fashion—a frog-downer downpour for several minutes, followed by hours of sunshine. Bring sunscreen. **Water Temperature:** Winter approximately 80°F, with summer 83°F. **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 9.04 (Pesos). While American dollars are widely accepted, it is best to use a credit card if the merchant will accept one, as this will fetch the best exchange rate. ATM machines near the plaza in San Miguel work with many U.S. debit and ATM cards, and dispense local currency. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time minus 1 hour. Cozumel and Cancún observe daylight-savings time, from May to September.

**DIVE OPERATORS:** Aqua Safaris (831) 479-4386 [www.aquasafaris.com](http://www.aquasafaris.com) • Aqua World [www.aquaworld.com](http://www.aquaworld.com) • Aquatics Sports Dive Shop [www.scubacozumel.com](http://www.scubacozumel.com) • Blue Bubble Divers (800) 878-8853 [www.bluebubble.com](http://www.bluebubble.com) • Blue Note [www.bluenotesuba.com](http://www.bluenotesuba.com) • Caribbean Divers [www.cozumel-diving.net/caribbean\\_divers/](http://www.cozumel-diving.net/caribbean_divers/) • Cozumel Equalizers (800) 925-9939 [www.equalizer.net](http://www.equalizer.net) • Cozumel Sports [www.cozumelsports.com](http://www.cozumelsports.com) • Del Mar Aquatics (800) 435-3240 [www.dive-cozumel.com](http://www.dive-cozumel.com) • Dive House Cozumel [www.divehouse.com](http://www.divehouse.com) • Dive Palancar (800) 433-0885 [www.dsi-divetours.com/dpal.htm](http://www.dsi-divetours.com/dpal.htm) • Dive Paradise (800) 308-5125 [www.diveparadise.com](http://www.diveparadise.com) • Sand Dollar Sports (888) 737-6399 [www.sanddollarsports.com](http://www.sanddollarsports.com) • Scuba Club Cozumel (800) 847-5708 [www.scubaclubcozumel.com](http://www.scubaclubcozumel.com) • Scuba-Du (800) 372-0200 [www.cozumel.net/scubadu](http://www.cozumel.net/scubadu) • Yellow Rose Divers (888) 366-8708 [www.yellowrosedivers.com](http://www.yellowrosedivers.com) • Yucatech Expeditions (011) 52-987-2-56-59 512-847-5737 e-mail: [yucatech@prodigy.net.mx](mailto:yucatech@prodigy.net.mx)

**RESORTS:** Allegro Resorts (800) 858-2258 [www.allegroresort.com](http://www.allegroresort.com) • Casa Del Mar (800) 435-2340 [www.cozumel-hotels.net/casa\\_del\\_mar](http://www.cozumel-hotels.net/casa_del_mar) • Costa Club Cozumel Resort Hotel (800) 53-SUITE [www.costaclubcozumel.com](http://www.costaclubcozumel.com) • Fiesta Americana (877) FIESTA-8 [www.fiestaamericana.com](http://www.fiestaamericana.com) • Flamingo Dive Resort (800) 806-1601 [www.hotelflamingo.com](http://www.hotelflamingo.com) • Plaza Las Glorias (888) 599-DIVE

**RESOURCES:** Cozumel Tourism (011) 52-987-2-0972 • Lonely Planet Books [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com) • Skin Diver Online [www.skin-diver.com](http://www.skin-diver.com)

The essence of the EDP—a principle employed by every operator using fast boats on Cozumel—is that, as diving from a fast boat entails a backroll entry and a water exit up a steep transom ladder, and the sites tend to be deeper and the currents swifter; divers in the EDP need to demonstrate self-sufficiency. A max of six or seven divers go out per boat.

## Anchored!

The next morning finds us on Maracaibo Reef—Cozumel's second most southerly—in less than 40 minutes,

**Crowded with tube and barrel sponges, seafans and color, most of Cozumel's reefs are an U/W photographer's dream.**



**A school of Horse-eye Jacks, the resident fish of Cozumel waters.**

well before most boats have made it halfway down the southern portion of the island. Big Black Grouper and other large fish wait for us. We see turtles again (we'll see them on virtually every first dive of the week), along with Southern Stingrays, round rays, an Eagle Ray and large fish that send me leafing through my copy of *Reef Fish of the Caribbean*.

Like clockwork, we dive, Devil's Throat (long, serpentine coral tunnels), Punta Tenich, Colombia Deep and more—literally every site that I've brought on my "wish list." Being on the EDP allows us to dive deeper than one usually would, deep enough to see where the wall drops spectacularly into deep, velvet blue.

And every day, we are returned to the hotel by lunchtime—allowing plenty of time to do the three "Ss"—sightseeing, siesta and shopping. My wife, not accustomed to seeing me by daylight during a dive trip, wonders aloud if I'm getting enough diving done. I'm really starting to like this place. 🐠

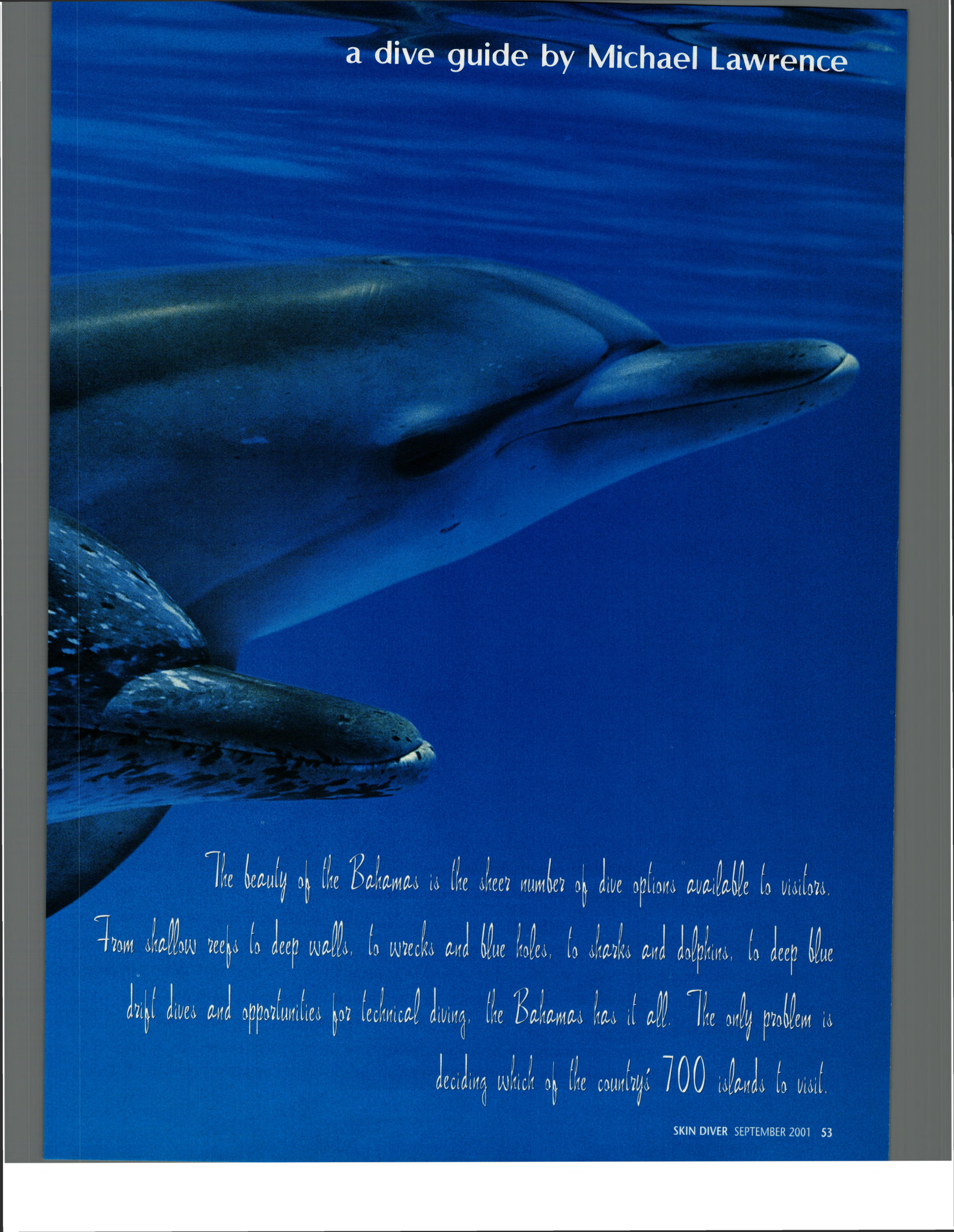
*Special thanks to Costa Club, Dive Paradise and Yucatech Expeditions for diving and accommodations.*



# Bahamas' BOUNTY

Photo/Daniel McCulloch, Seapics



A large whale, possibly a humpback whale, is shown swimming underwater in deep blue water. The whale's head and upper body are visible, with its eye and blowhole clearly defined. The water is a deep, vibrant blue, and the lighting creates a sense of depth and tranquility.

a dive guide by Michael Lawrence

*The beauty of the Bahamas is the sheer number of dive options available to visitors. From shallow reefs to deep walls, to wrecks and blue holes, to sharks and dolphins, to deep blue drift dives and opportunities for technical diving, the Bahamas has it all. The only problem is deciding which of the country's 700 islands to visit.*



# Bahamas' Bounty



Stretching for 750 miles southeast of Florida's Atlantic coast, the Islands of the Bahamas encompass thousands of cays and rocky islets as well as 100,000 square miles of crystal blue water. Deep oceanic trenches divide this massive space, creating several large, shallow banks—flat-topped mesas covered by no more than 20 feet of water. The surrounding trenches reach depths in excess of 6,000 feet. Many of the islands are perched on the edge of these deep and often vertical walls. And, to the south is a smattering of islands that are the exposed peaks of subsea mountains.

Professional dive operations are found on 12 islands, with more distant sites served by a fleet of at least eight live-aboard dive vessels. It's a combination that offers divers a complete package of underwater experiences.





**A legion of grunts masks the reef in a shimmering carpet of yellow.**

**Below: The games dolphins play—if you can keep up!**

southern end of the Bimini Chain at Orange Cay. And, recently, encounters have developed with a pod residing north of Bimini, only 48 miles from Miami. Encounters generally occur near the end of the day and have added a new dimension to Bimini's long list of attractions.

For guaranteed Bottlenose Dolphins, your best bet is to go with one of two programs. UNEXSO's Dolphin Experience on Grand Bahama offers a variety of encounters. Sanctuary Bay, a massive lagoon connected to Grand Bahama's extensive canal system, is home to more than a dozen dolphins. A sophisticated interaction program includes an informational presentation, snorkeling in the bay with the dolphins, as well as the unique opportunity to swim in open water with these semi-captive animals.

Two dolphins accompany divers and snorkelers to a sandy bottom in 50 feet of water straight out from the canal entrance. Divers descend to the sand where a number of activities take place. The dolphins come within touching distance, perform personal interactions, a few training exercises and simply swim with divers. Though very different from a wild experience, it is uniquely gratifying. In addition to this program, the Atlantis Resort (on Paradise Island, north of Nassau) also offers confined water dolphin interaction experiences.

## DOLPHINS

**D**olphin experiences come in two flavors: Spotted and Bottlenose. If you prefer a truly wild encounter, then Spotted Dolphins will be your choice. While potentially found anywhere in the Bahamas, three locations are most dependable. The best known of these is White Sand Ridge. Found north of Grand Bahama's western end, it is accessed by live-aboard. Much more gregarious than most species, Atlantic Spotted Dolphins respond to the sound of an approaching boat's engines, gathering around the boat in anticipation of interacting with snorkelers. A less well-known area also accessed by live-aboard, lies at the





# Bahamas' Bounty

Shallow reef patches, in water often less than 20 feet, make the Bahamas a beacon for snorkelers as well as divers.

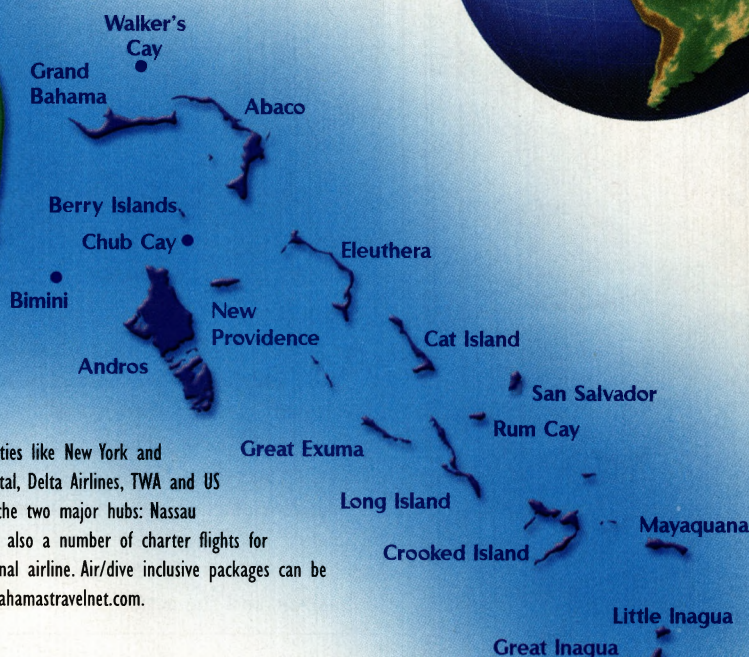






Florida

Atlantic Ocean



## GETTING THERE:

The Bahamas has regular, relatively inexpensive flights from Miami, Ft. Lauderdale and Orlando, as well as other East Coast cities like New York and Boston. Airlines include American Airlines/American Eagle, Continental, Delta Airlines, TWA and US Airways. The Bahamas has seven international airports, including the two major hubs: Nassau International Airport and Freeport International Airport. There are also a number of charter flights for transportation between the islands, such as Bahamasair, the national airline. Air/dive inclusive packages can be booked through Bahamas Travel Network, (800) 513-5535, [www.bahamstravelnet.com](http://www.bahamstravelnet.com).

## BAHAMAS FACTS & TIPS:

**Best Time To Visit:** Year-round, with trade breezes bringing pleasant temperatures. The so-called "peak season" runs from mid-December to mid-April, and you can expect higher hotel prices. **Topside Climate:** Temperature averages 80 to 85°F. In general, the islands are balmy year-round. Daily high temperatures rarely drop below 60°F in winter (December to February), or rise above 90°F in summer (June to August). The rainy season extends from May to November, when hurricanes are a slim possibility. **Water Temperature:** Winter averages 70°F, summer 85°F. **Exchange Rate:** USD is easily accepted. **Time Difference:** Same as Eastern Standard Time.

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**At Shark Arena the locals seem to have no understanding of personal space. Dozens of Caribbean Reef Sharks angle for a appetizer on a pole-spear. Opposite page: Wreck City, where snorkeler and shark tour groups mingle.**

seem frenetic, is quite controlled. (Diving the wall adjacent to Shark Arena produces more sedate shark viewing

Photos/Al Hornsby

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opportunities.) Shark feeds of this style are also available off Grand Bahama.

Stella Maris on Long Island was the first to try shark feeding excursions. Having no idea what to expect, they took a more cowboy-like approach, having divers drop through the sharks, assemble on the bottom, while they simply flung a bucket full of chum off the back of the boat. It created a true feeding frenzy and continues to do so to this day. While it may be shorter in duration, the sharks hang around for the remainder of the dive over a coral-strewn sand bottom.

Walker's Cay, found at the top of the island chain in the Abacos, easily qualifies as the most highly attended shark feeds. This "Shark Rodeo" attracts up to 200 sharks including Reef, Lemon, Blacktip, Nurse and occasionally small Tiger Sharks. The chum is frozen in large barrels and suspended approximately 15 feet off the bottom. It is whimsically referred to as the "chum-sicle." The sharks circle the chumsicle, attacking it and gradually whittling it down as it melts. Divers are allowed to swim freely, and the dive is frequently attended by snorkelers.

Other shark dives are held off Andros, Bimini and Great Abaco, with more operations joining all the time.

#### WALLS AND SHALLOW REEFS

There is such an abundance of superb reefs and walls in the Bahamas that the list seems endless. Virtually every island is surrounded in part by a fringing reef, some taking the form of spur

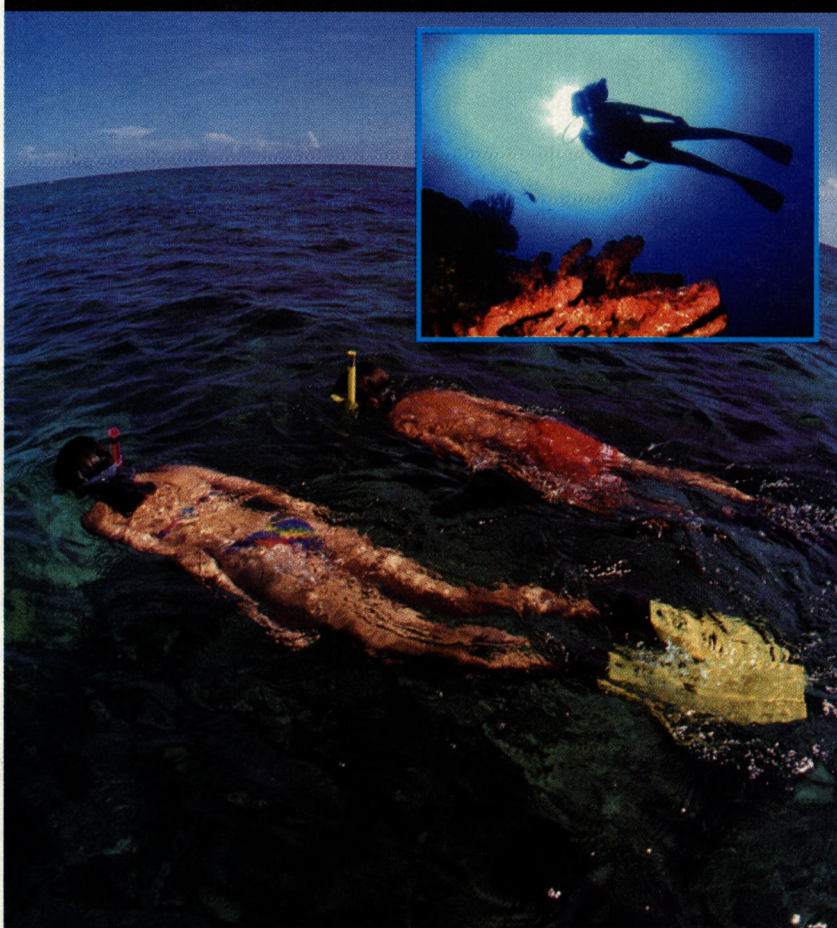


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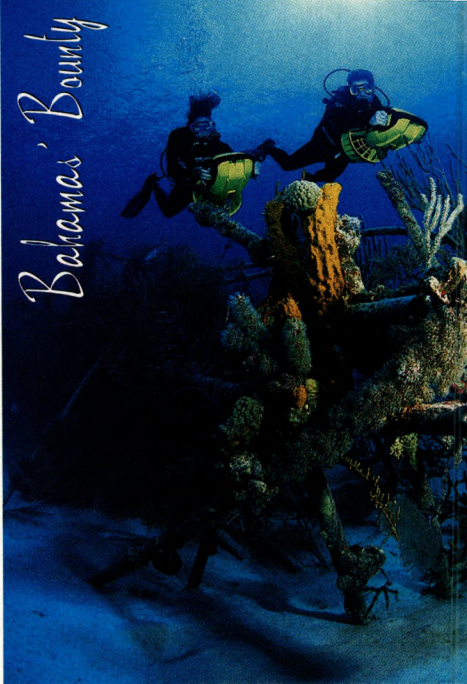
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and groove formations, while others are sprawling patch reefs. On many islands, walls start as shallow as 30 feet. Legendary wall destinations include San Salvador and Andros, as well as New Providence, Grand Bahama, the northern Exumas, the superb walls of uninhabited Conception Island and numerous islands to the southeast visited only by live-aboard.

The islands of the Abacos are known for highly variegated shallow- to medium-depth reefs. Eleuthera, while having some great deep diving, is best known for the shallow sites to the east and north. Beyond this, divers can expect every island, and every dive operator, to provide them with some excellent shallow- to medium-depth reef diving.

### WRECKS

At least 50 wrecks of various forms throughout the country are dived on a regular basis. They range in depth from 15 feet to past 100. Hot spots include Wreck City on the southwest corner of New Providence, home to a dozen and a half mostly intact natural wrecks, artificial reefs and movie sets. The Devil's Backbone, a treacherous shallow reef bordering the northern shore of Eleuthera, has been responsible for tearing the belly out of countless vessels. Most wrecks here are no

Photo/Michael Lawrence

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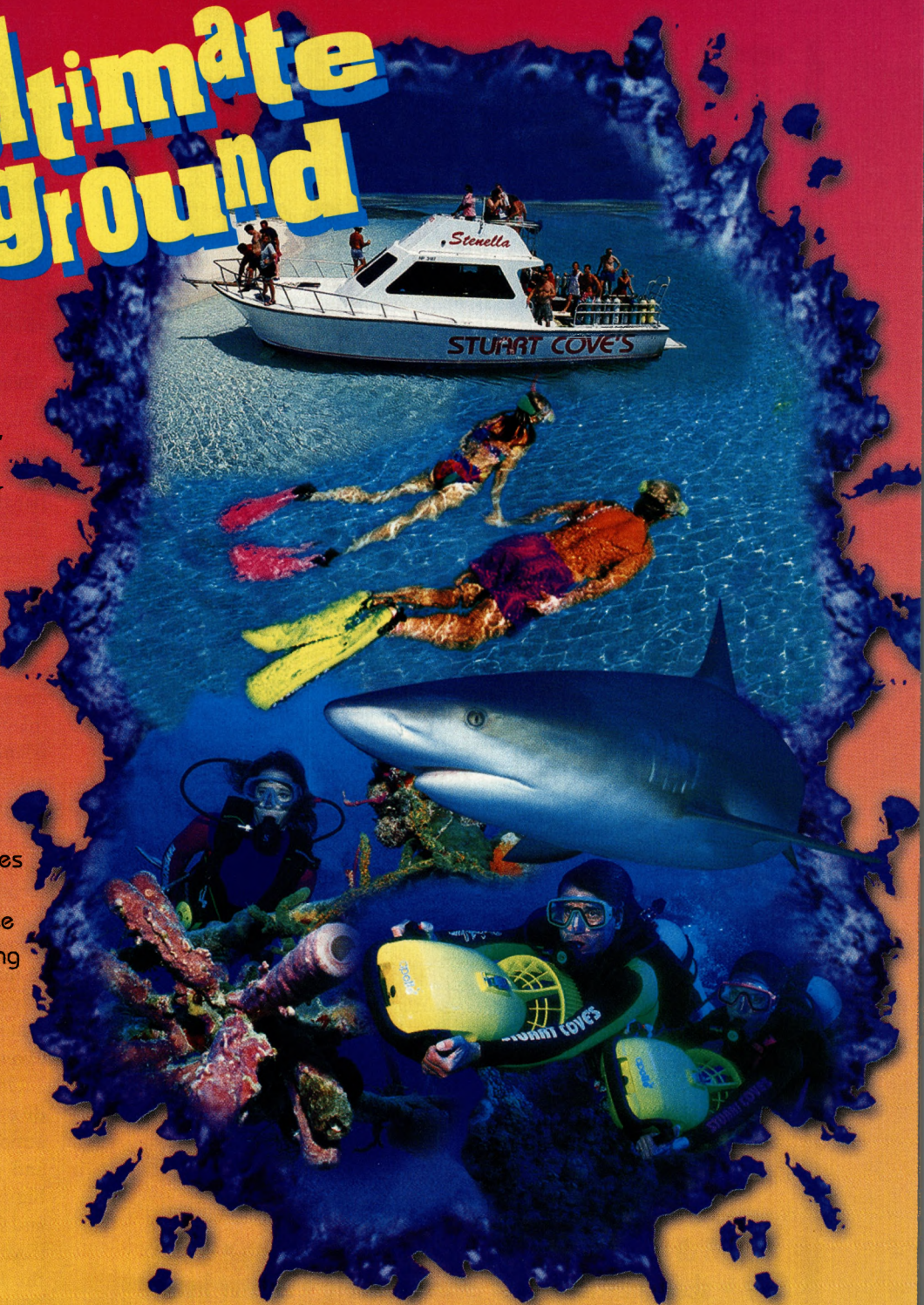
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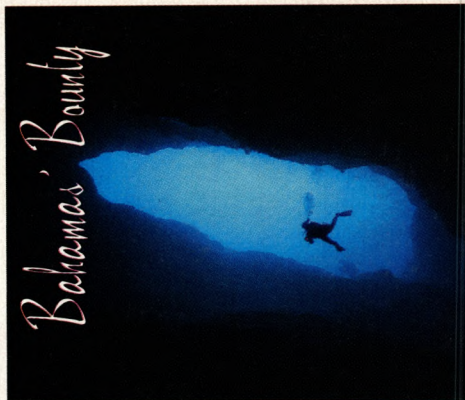
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## BLUE HOLES

With a porous limestone base underlaid by interconnected cavern systems, the Bahamas offer as many inland and oceanic blue holes as any island nation in the world. These entrances into the subterranean heart of the country come in many fascinating forms. Andros is the undisputed king of blue hole diving, with more than 50 recorded and explored. Other fruitful areas include the southern Exumas, Grand Bahama, Eleuthera and one beauty 10 miles east of Nassau. While some are safe for casual exploration, others are complex and deep, requiring cavern and cave certifications.

One final consideration for visiting divers to consider is topside culture and atmosphere. If you are looking for glitz and glitter, make your destination the big islands of Nassau, Paradise Island and Grand Bahama. On the other hand, if you want to see the original heart of the Bahamas, head to any of the Out Islands (the collective name for the remainder of the inhabited islands) and enjoy an air of complete relaxation. Either way, it's hard to go wrong. 🐟

## WANT TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE BAHAMAS?

Check out *Skin Diver Online* for the new *Bahamas Dive Guide*. Detailed dive maps, accommodations, dive operators and more are at your fingertips at [www.skin-diver.com](http://www.skin-diver.com).

Photo: Michael Lawrence





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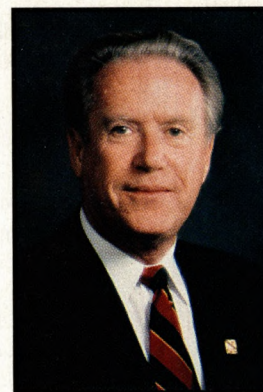


# DR. BENNETT RECEIVES PAVLOV MEDAL

DR. PETER B. BENNETT, President and CEO of Divers Alert Network (DAN), has received the Pavlov Medal from the Russian Academy of Sciences. With the award, the Academy recognizes Bennett's nearly 50 years of research in dive physiology and dive medicine. Bennett, one of only 21 non-Russians in the Academy, received the award in

May from Dr. Yuri V. Natochin, Professor of Physiology and Dean of the Medical faculty at Petersburg State University. Natochin is head of the Academy's Physiology Division. Bennett joined a league of other non-Russians named to the Academy, including Charles R. Darwin, Louis Pasteur and Michael De Bakey. Bennett has been a member of the Academy since 1994. "I was completely surprised,

pleased and honored by the award," Bennett said. "I know it is a rare event for a Russian to get such an award. For me, a foreigner, it is a singular honor."



Photo/Courtesy DAN

In a letter Bennett received from the Russian Academy of Sciences, the organization praised his career in dive physiology and medicine, including the development of trimix. The letter

**"...you do not show any evidence of slowing down," the letter [from RAS] read.**

praised Bennett's founding of DAN and its international affiliates, and his publishing accomplishments.

"After nearly 50 years of research into diving physiology and medicine...you do not show any evidence of slowing down," the letter read. "We wish you to be able to continue your dedication to research in diving for many years to come."

The Russian Academy of Sciences, established by Peter the Great and now in its 277th year, is the oldest such academy in the world. It is the largest scientific establishment of Russia, with staff numbering 112,000, more than 53,000 of which are scientific re-searchers.

The country's leading scientific institution, the Russian Academy of Sciences is a self-governing body; its activities are regulated by the laws of the Russian Federation and its own charter.

For more information on the Russian Academy of Sciences, visit [www.ras.ru](http://www.ras.ru). For more information on DAN, visit [www.diversalertnetwork.org](http://www.diversalertnetwork.org).

Correction: In "Seduced by the Virgins: The Ultimate USVI Dive Guide" (May 2001), it should be noted that Sail Rock is not for novice divers and St. Croix is the southernmost island.



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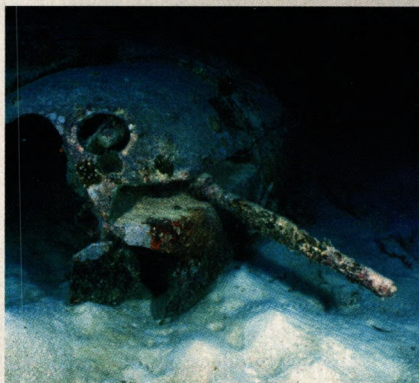


# Warplane Found

(continued from page 20)

"When we first touched down, one or more fell out and exploded at the set depth of 15 feet," Wisecarver said. "This was aft of the plane and caused no damage, but on the next touchdown one or more went down and blew up under the tail section. This broke the tail section just aft of the body and of course the plane started to sink. After I swam under the open bomb bay and determined everything was out, the motor launches finally came and picked us up."

Fifty-five years later, two divers, Gary Soberay and Dan Cadra from the Sam's Tours search team found the plane near the site where the *Kenneth Whiting* had been moored in December



1944. Even though the seaplane has been underwater for 55 years, its shape remains distinctly visible.

"The fuselage is broken up, but the outline of the plane is intact," Dan Cadra said. "Although both engines and propellers are separated from the wings, the radial design of the engines is very noticeable."

Cadra also said the tail and rudder stick straight up off the bottom. The team also discovered a machine gun and turret near the plane.

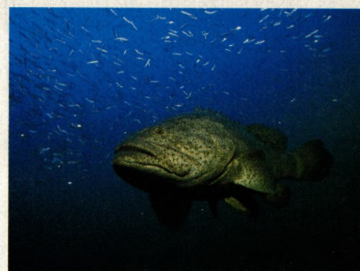
Scott said he intends to return to the site to document it further. "The fact that it's the only known U.S. warplane in the waters here makes it an important discovery and an important contribution to the tangible history of these islands," Scott said. "Hopefully, we can share what we found with others by getting clear pictures and videos of the plane." 🐟

## A Fish By Any Other Name...

ACCORDING TO *FISHERIES*, THE AMERICAN Fisheries Society's monthly magazine, the Jewfish is no longer known as the Jewfish.

"...although we found no evidence that the name Jewfish was being used offensively, it was deemed as offensive by many individuals, including those of a minority group," reads the article. "Therefore, the time has come for a change."

The fish previously known as Jewfish is now known as the Goliath Grouper. It is commonly found in Southern Atlantic and Caribbean waters and is often seen by divers. 🐟



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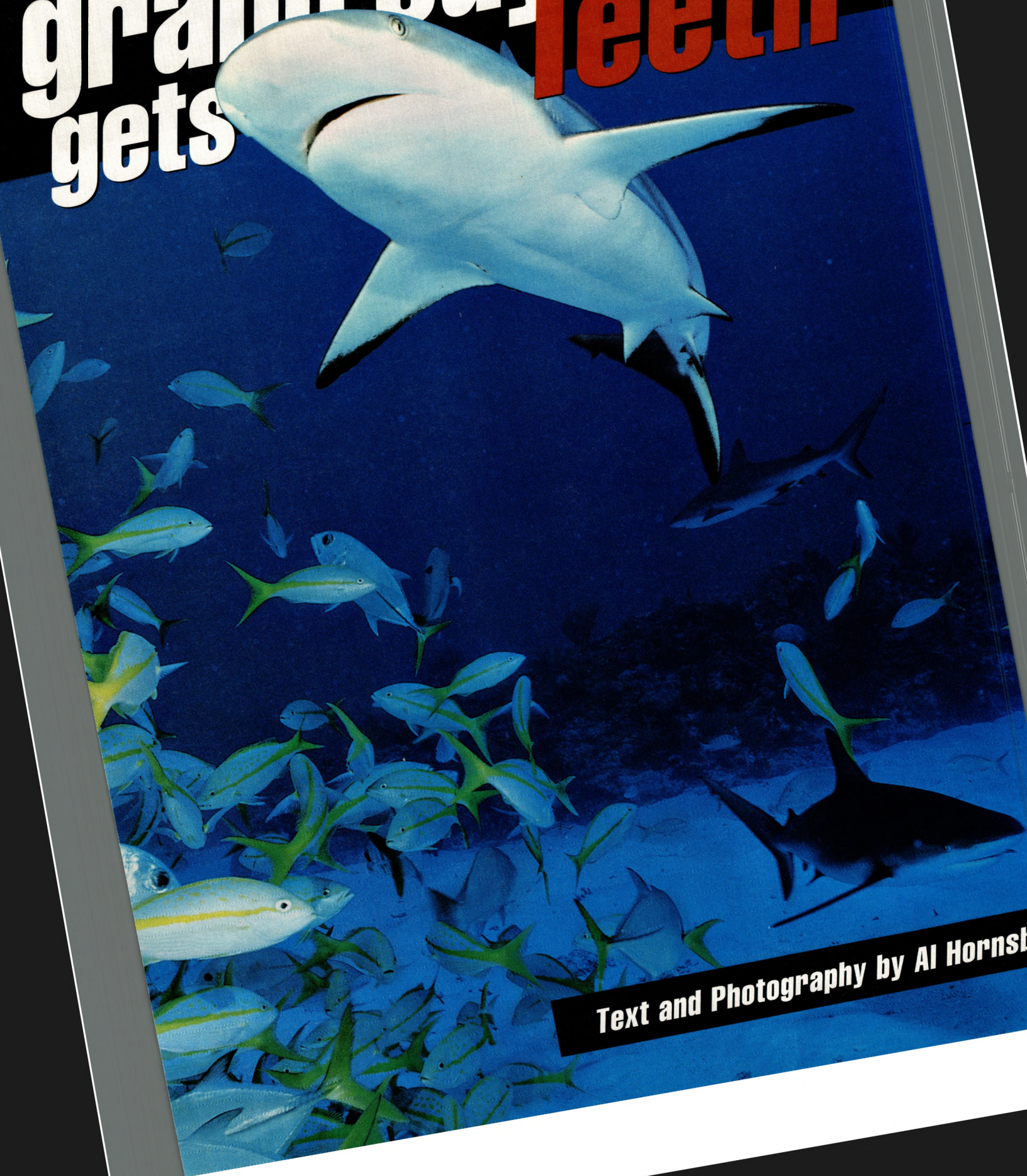
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# grand cayman gets **Teeth**



Text and Photography by Al Hornsby



**When you think of shark diving, there are a number of renowned destinations that come to mind—the Bahamas, Tahiti, Australia—but not, definitely not, Grand Cayman. Until now, that is. Grand Cayman is jumping into the shark diving market head first with its own shark dive at Shark Alley, a reef bursting with life just outside the South Channel off the island's East End. Established by the Ocean Frontiers dive operation, the Shark Awareness Project, licensed by the Cayman Islands' Marine Conservation Board, is a jaw-dropping diving and educational experience, all in 50 feet of Cayman-clear water.**

A resident band of about 20 Caribbean Reef Sharks attend the feeds, conducted each Thursday and Saturday by Ocean Frontiers' staff. The dive procedure has been designed specifically to minimize the direct association between divers and food.

encounter, divers will have the thrill of learning something useful, as well.

"Our goal with the program is to offer exciting dives and education to divers, as well as add to the science concerning sharks and shark behavior,"

according to Mark Kay, who runs the shark project. "We are also licensed to conduct tagging, and we cooperate with the University of New

**...it's not all just an adrenaline rush. With Ocean Frontiers' shark encounter, divers will have the thrill of learning something useful, as well.**

When the boat arrives at the site, a crate of squid is lowered to the bottom before divers get in the water. Once the feed starts, divers descend to observe from close proximity. The crystal water and colorful reef, along with the Yellowtail Snappers and Horse-eye Jacks that gather around the bait, make this an U/W photographer's dream dive. And the sharks show little shyness at being photographed from close range.

But it's not all just an adrenaline rush. With Ocean Frontiers' shark



**Opposite page: A Caribbean Reef Shark just about to smile for the camera. Right: Calamari Chum du jour.**



**Lunch is served.**

Brunswick, Nova University and the Guy Harvey Shark Research Program, among others."

The Thursday dive is preceded by an educational session, briefing participants on what to expect in the water and giving interesting insights into shark behavior and physiology. The Saturday session involves a half-day educational program followed by a shark dive research task. Guests assist the crew, and earn a PADI specialty, too. 🐟

*For more information, contact Ocean Frontiers, (345) 947-7500, or the U.S. reservations office at (800) 544-6576, [www.oceanfrontiers.com](http://www.oceanfrontiers.com).*



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## DIVER'S LIBRARY

BY MICHELLE DANNER

Welcome to the Diver's

Library, where each

month we bring you the

latest in diving media.

JUST SAYING THE WORD "TAHITI" causes most to dream of crystal blue water and sunkissed skin—*Taaa-hiii-tiii*—visions of coral, sharks, stingrays, these French Polynesian islands have them all. Lonely Planet's *Diving & Snorkeling Tahiti & French Polynesia* brings to life both the topside and underwater world of the South Pacific. Filled with colorful photographs, the guide offers information on accommodations, topside attractions,

### *Diving & Snorkeling Tahiti & French Polynesia*

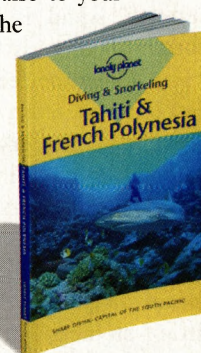
by Jean-Bernard Carillet  
 and Tony Wheeler,  
 Lonely Planet  
 Publications, \$16.99,  
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diving sites, snorkeling locales and dive operators.

Each dive site is mapped out and rated. Before you book a trip you can find out the diffi-

culty of a dive, depth, location, access information, marine life common to the area, and get a description of the typical dive and snorkeling conditions.

*Diving & Snorkeling Tahiti & French Polynesia* will guide you not only to phenomenal diving, but also to your dream vacation in the South Pacific. 🐟



Note:

In Diver's

Library

(June 2001), the

correct website

address for Hawaii's Spinner Dolphins is [www.aboveandbelowvideo.com](http://www.aboveandbelowvideo.com).

For information on how to submit a product for review in Diver's Library, contact Michelle Danner at [dannerm@emapusa.com](mailto:dannerm@emapusa.com).



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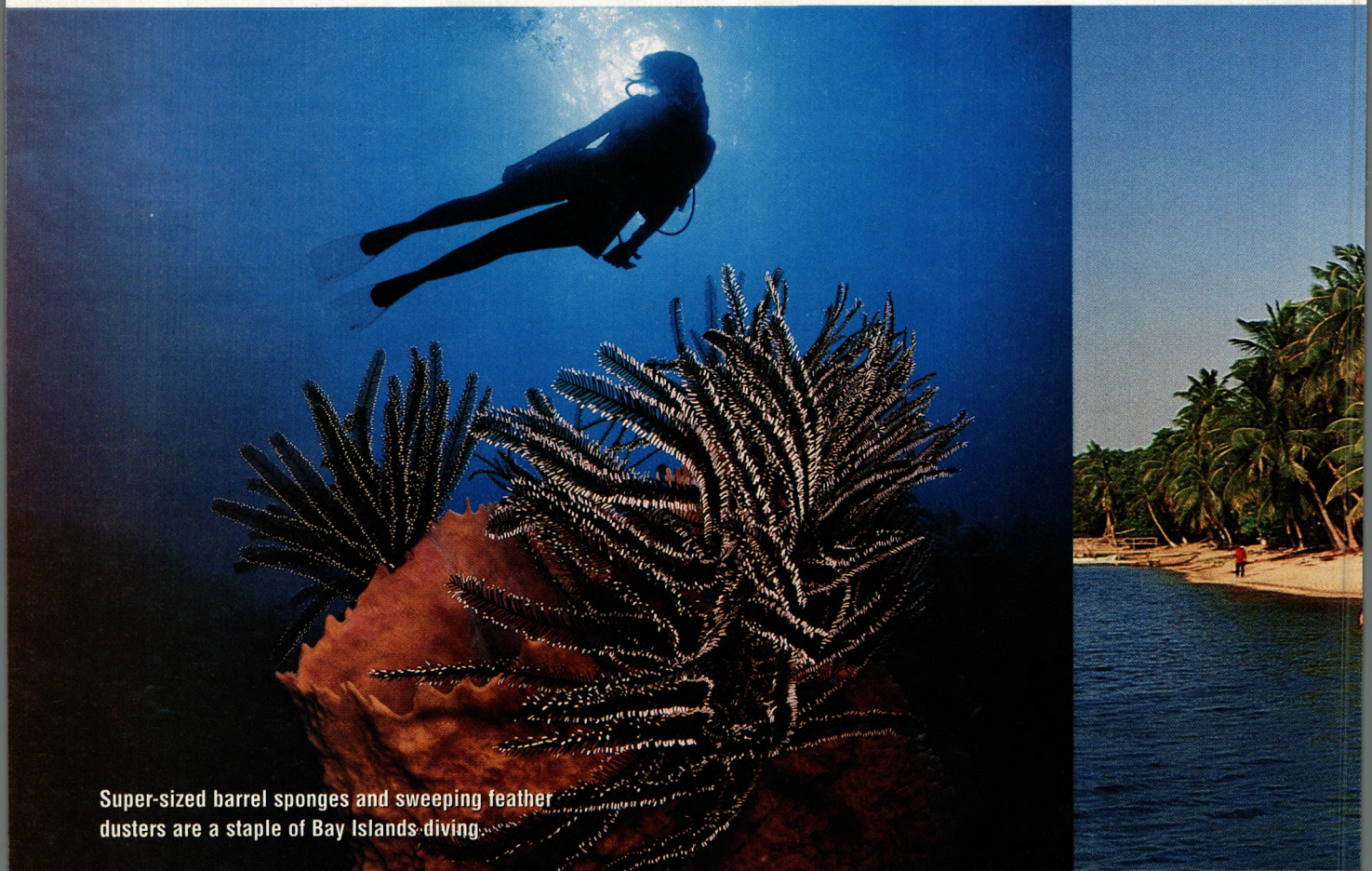
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# BAY ISLAND



Super-sized barrel sponges and sweeping feather dusters are a staple of Bay Islands diving.



Blossoms of purple tunicates seem to glow from within.

*Hugo rubbed his Elvis sideburns and contemplated my question. "I guess I've seen about a hundred Whale Sharks around here," he finally concluded.*

*My heart rate jumped. A ball of baitfish churned the water 50 yards from the boat, and I strained to see the big fin breaking water.*

*"And how long have you been a divemaster here?" I asked Hugo.*

*"About four years," he said in a thick French-Swiss accent.*

*"So that's roughly two Whale Sharks every month," I countered with stunning mathematical acumen. Hugo just smiled. "If you say so," he said.*



# DS BLITZ

by  
Fred  
Garth



A scene stolen from *Castaway*.

For reasons not altogether understood, Whale Sharks love Utila as much as European backpackers do. Utila, the western most dot of the Honduran Bay Islands, is professed to be the world's cheapest place to get certified and the hippest Whale Shark hangout in the Caribbean. Sightings are so frequent that almost every surface interval is spent bobbing around, praying to the fish gods and scanning the horizon. It had been a whopping two weeks since the last Whale Shark encounter, and like a slugger in a 15-game slump, we were due, baby. Suddenly, a school of Bonito ripped through the baitfish.

"Over there," Hugo yelled to the captain. "I think I see..."

Oh, but wait. I'm getting way ahead

of myself.

My jaunt to the Bay Islands had kicked off a week earlier on Roatan, the big daddy in the four-island chain (not counting dozens of random rocks and islets). But I really began my journey way back in 1988, when less than 20,000 people lived on Roatan and about six resorts quietly existed. Now, over 50,000 people live here and the resorts, well, even my math's not that good.

My girl Friday was Kathy Knoll, underwater model, red wine connoisseur, American Express Platinum member and Bay Islands expert. She collected me at the airport driving a large beer can called a Daewoo Tico, a mutant cross be-

tween a toaster and an automobile. Kathy (K2 for short), led the way to Anthony's Key Resort (AKR), which has grown into one of the world's best dive centers. With a fleet of boats rivaling the Honduran Navy, AKR services as many as 130 divers per day. They've developed the Institute of Marine Sciences—a dolphin and marine mammal center—into an impressive interactive learning center. They host a shark dive and even an all-day trip to the virgin reefs of Barbareta, a journey that circumnavigates Roatan.

I'd first done the dolphin dive years earlier and repeated the pleasure. But, I really wanted to see this shark diving thing. As it turns out, two Italians have



affiliated with the big resorts to share a shark experience they've developed over the past year.

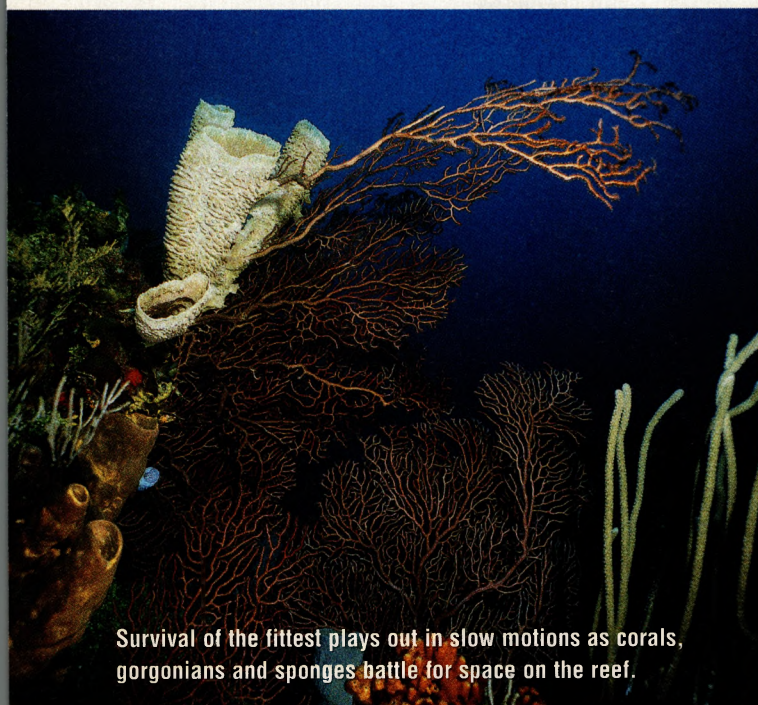
"If-a the shark-a come in-a too close-a," Sergio enunciated painfully, "just stay-a behind Maurilio and me-a."

"Mama mia, no problemo," we all agreed-o.

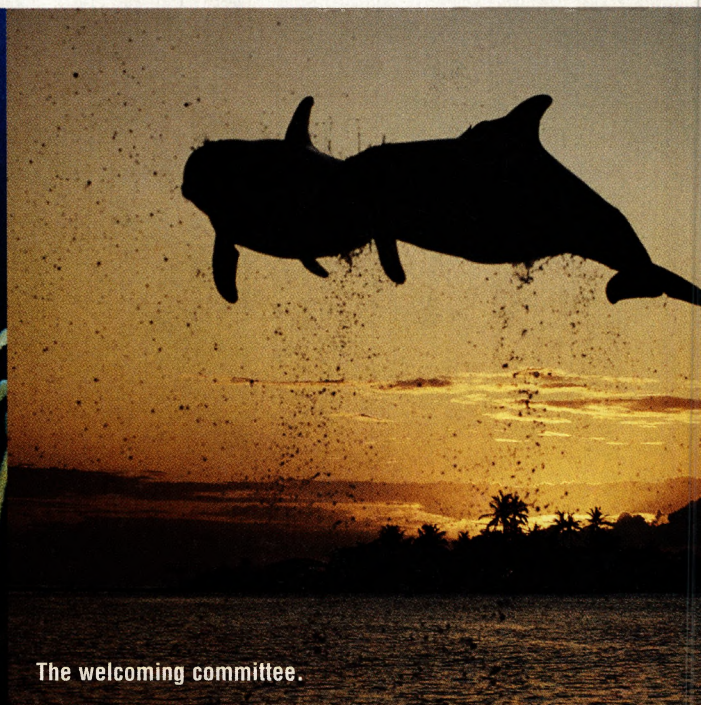
adrenaline and monochromatics of sharks and dolphins, the Bay Islands have their share of psychedelic colors. I'm not certain, but I think the Azure Vase Sponges are illuminated by black lights someone has planted in the coral. I'm not kidding. red rope sponges, purple tunicates, strawberry

with thousands of dives all over the world, I never thought I'd get silly about a barrel sponge. But that's diving. The expected is fantastic. The surprises are better.

Case in point is one of the world's greatest reef dives, Mary's Place, on Roatan's south shore. For my money,



Survival of the fittest plays out in slow motions as corals, gorgonians and sponges battle for space on the reef.



The welcoming committee.

We had about 12 beefy Caribbean Reef Sharks, one of whom was a 10-foot pregnant mama. She was eating for five or so, and I kept-a my distance. After half an hour we said, "Caio!" But two or three sharks lingered, secretly hoping to chew on Kathy's leg.

Beyond the



#### WHAT ABOUT THE WHALE SHARKS?

Some claim Utila is a Whale

Shark magnet because the continental shelf sneaks in close to the island's north shore. Sounds feasible enough, since tagging monitors have revealed Whales Sharks hitting water temperatures as low as the 50s°F. That means they sometimes go very deep, such as off the continental shelf. The best seasons for sighting the big spotted fish are spring and fall, specifically, April, May, September and October.

fields, it's all part of the mind-expanding experience, even without nitrogen narcosis. On one dive at Barbareta, K2 and I ran across a refrigerator-sized barrel sponge that blew us away. The thing was prolific with macro life. Each little crevice was home to a critter—a barrel sponge gone condo. Banded shrimp, gobies, feather dusters, blennies, thousands of brittle starfish, Arrow Crabs galore, each in its own little protective cell. We circled it at least five times and could've spent several dives peeking into each nook for a new surprise. For a grizzled diver like me,

it's up there with Palau's Blue Corner and Cayman's Bloody Bay Wall. But more than just a dive, Mary's Place is a testament to the Bay Islands' protection of their marine resource. Back in the 1980s, I dived Mary's for the first time and was instantly enamored. Three 60-foot deep cracks cut through the reef, connect in a kind of Z-formation, then fall over the wall into the blue oblivion. Sponges, gorgonians and corals sprout as if they were in Martha Stewart's garden. The colors, the light and shadows, the dramatic geology, it's the dive we dream about when we



#### CHAMBERS, CHAMBERS, EVERYWHERE

For a relatively small destination, the Bay Islands are replete with decompression chambers, three in all. Part of the reason is the large number of lobster divers (the Bay Islands have a direct link to Red Lobster restaurants) who regularly violate every diving table ever written in pursuit of

the spiny bugs. The silver lining is that sport divers benefit from the missteps of native divers. On Roatan, both Fantasy Island and AKR have chambers. On Utila, the Utila Lodge operates a small chamber.

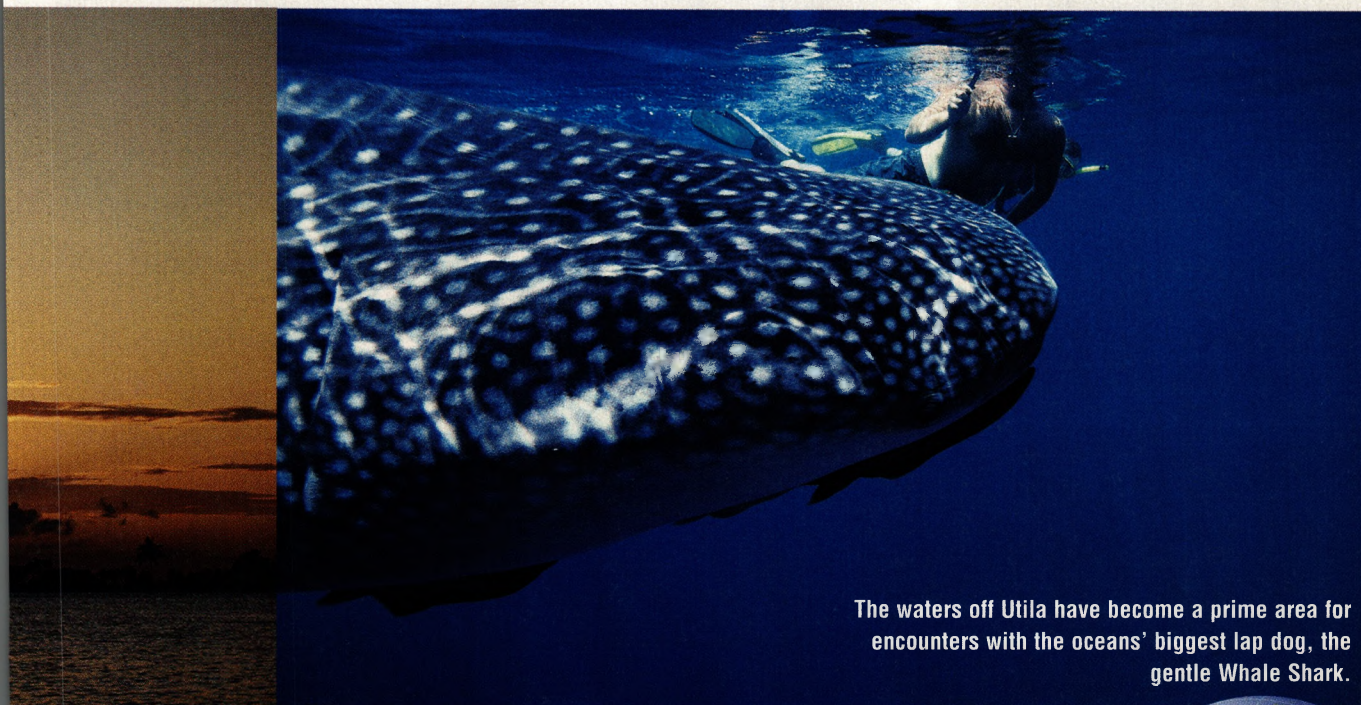


become divers. However, Mary has a problem: She's wide enough to swim through (about 10 feet on average), but narrow enough for careless divers to kick stuff off the walls. And that's exactly what happened. By the early '90s, Mary had been stripped of life. So, to their credit, the dive operators

closed the site for five years—just shut down their most popular attraction. That takes both guts and foresight, and it won my respect forever. Three years ago, Mary's reopened. Now she's as lush and dramatic as ever. Much of the success goes to Doc Rodowski, who lives on shore within sight of Mary's.

He's helped organize a schedule among operators so that Mary doesn't get dived out again. From time to time, Doc can be seen on his front porch monitoring the situation. As far as I know, it's the world's only dive site with a live-in steward guarding it 24/7.

Still under K2's guidance, we gassed



The waters off Utila have become a prime area for encounters with the oceans' biggest lap dog, the gentle Whale Shark.

## Skin Diver GUIDE • BAY ISLANDS

**GETTING THERE:** Continental is now scheduling service, and TACA, which had a virtual monopoly for many years, is also expanding their routes. You can also travel to Roatan via San Pedro Sula with American Airlines, and then Isla Airlines or TACA Airlines from the major hubs of Los Angeles, San Francisco, New Orleans, Houston and Miami.

**FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit:** Year-round; hot in summer, a tiny bit cooler in winter. There's a remote chance of hurricanes in August through September. **Topside Climate:** Tropical, hot and moist. **Water Temperature:** Summer, low to mid 80s°F; winter, ranging high 70s to low 80s°F. **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 15 Lempiras. USD is easily accepted. **Time Difference:** Eastern Standard Time minus 1 hour.

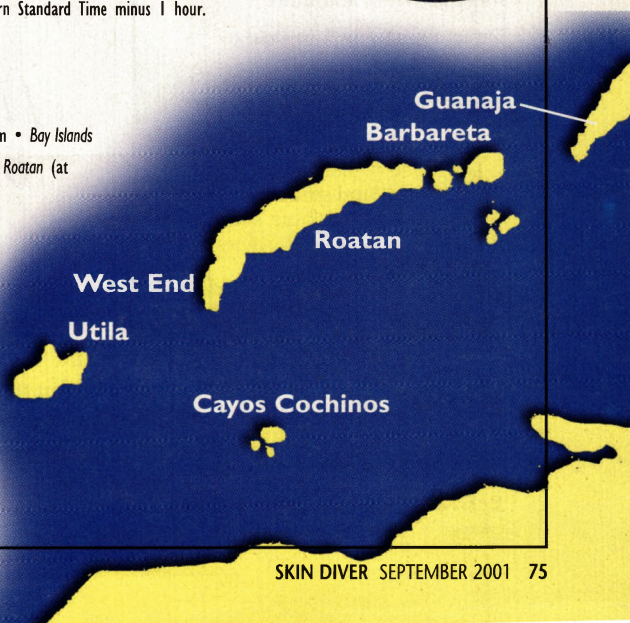
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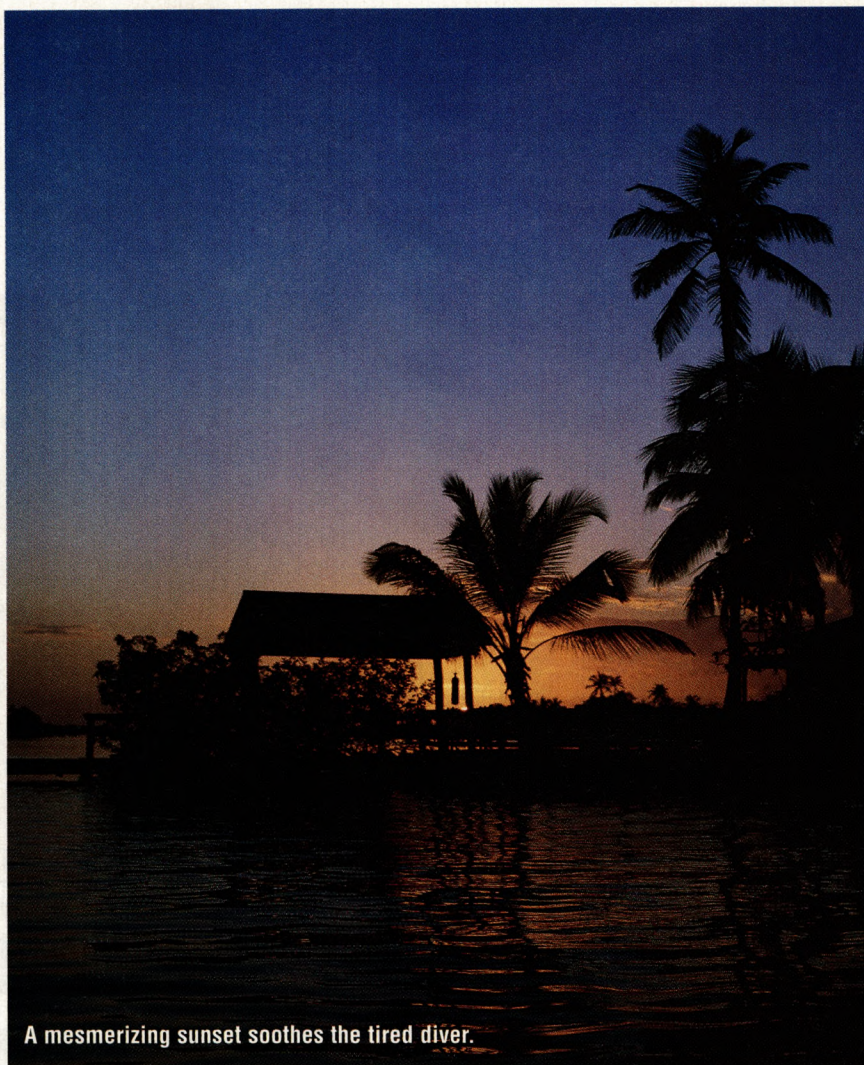
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A mesmerizing sunset soothes the tired diver.

Photo/Courtesy AKR

up the Tico, strapped in tight and hit all the hot spots. We chilled out with a couple of Salva Vida's at Coco View Resort and got the grand tour of the ever-expanding complex. Across the channel at Fantasy Island, I kept a

with tie-dyed wayfarers living on rice and beans and renting hammocks for two bucks a night. A couple of small hotels, like Sueño del Mar, offer AC and real rooms. But if you stay in an actual hotel, I think West Enders con-

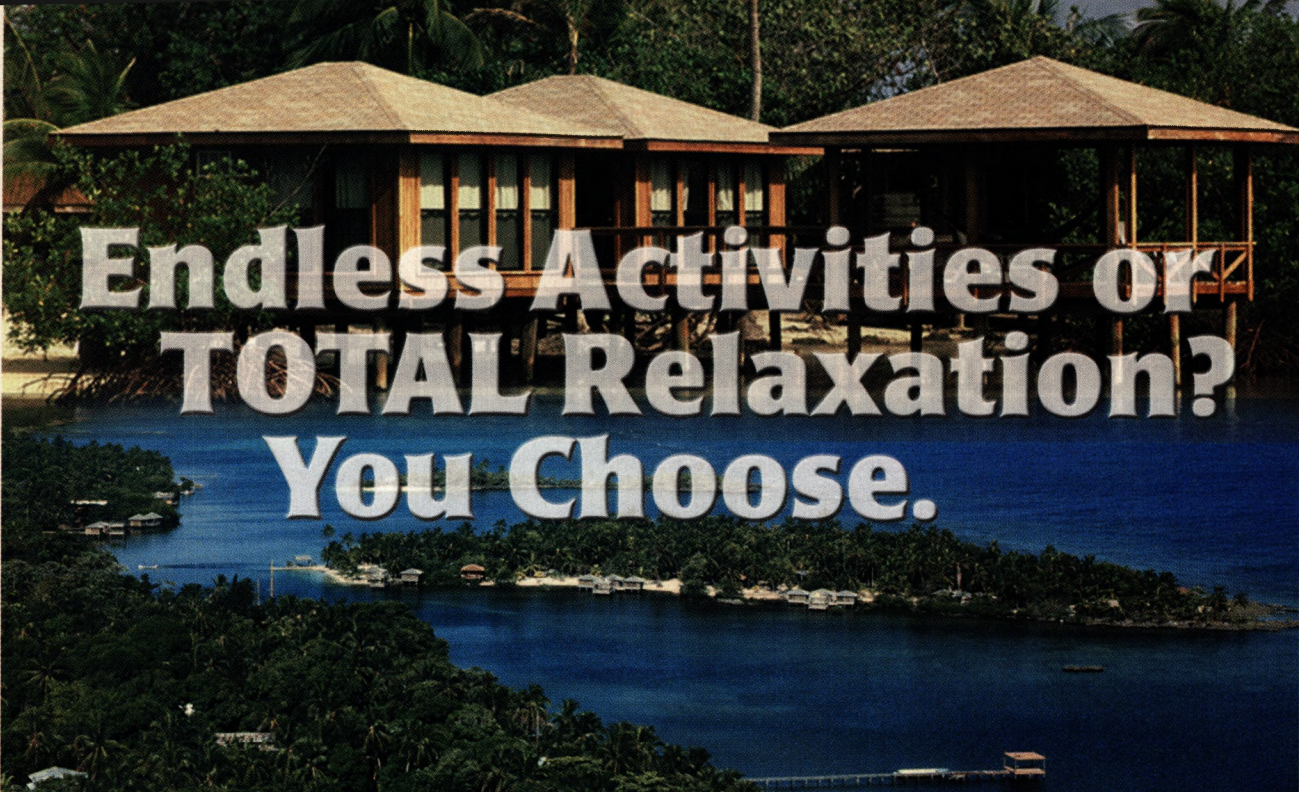
*As far as I know,  
[Mary's Place] is the world's  
only dive site with a live-in  
steward guarding it 24/7.*

sharp eye out for "de plane! de plane!" and learned that 60 more rooms are about to be added to the 80 they already have. We toured West End, which I remember as a gorgeous deserted beach in the '80s. The beach is still beautiful, but the place has become Budgetville,

sider you a Republican yuppie pig.

With Roatan swept clean, we bounced to Guanaja, the only island high enough to have its own year-round waterfall. Mountainous and lush, the island is home to several resorts, none of which are connected





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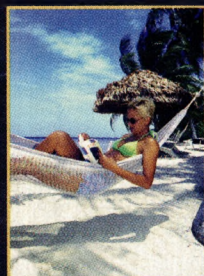


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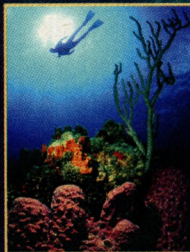
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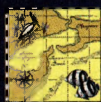


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by roads, so boat travel is a must. Guanaja has one of my favorite wreck dives anywhere, the *Jado Trader*, a freighter that's been down almost two decades. Just offshore from Posada del Sol resort, the *Trader* rests on its side in 130 feet of water and houses some mongo grouper. Unfortunately, we couldn't visit very long because Utila and the Whale Sharks were calling.

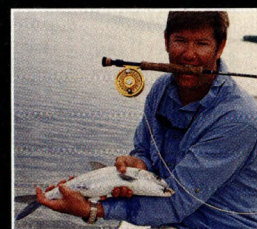
Back in Roatan to catch our flight to Utila, we stumbled into Troy Bodden, owner of Utila's Laguna Beach Resort. He convinced us to blow off the plane ride (*hey, twist my arm*) and cross the 20 miles of open ocean in his new 28-foot boat.

Bodden is the unofficial ambassador of Utila. A native of the island, he began in the diving biz a decade ago with a little shop servicing backpackers. Now Utila has at least a dozen such shops, and Bodden has moved up to resort status. He has also helped develop shipping routes to the island, a brand-new airport (to be completed summer/fall 2001), a new wreck (coming soon), and his pride and joy, Laguna Beach Resort. Utila's other dedicated resort, Utila Lodge, is run

### BONE BATTLES

I got dragged up several hundred stairs to a popular tree house called Rick's American Café for grub. Native Bostonians Steve and Mary Jazz own the place and serve steaks, ribs and seafood—you guessed it—American-style. Turns out Steve and I bonded like bonefish.

See, in addition to a hard-core diver, I'm also a fly-fishin' freak. And bone-



fish are the prize on the fly because they fight like Mike Tyson after a six-pack of Jolt Cola. Steve's 17-foot flats boat (the only one on the island) draws about three inches of water so it gets into the bones' living room. The next morning, his guide dropped me into the soup, and I hooked up. After each battle, the fish were gently released, and the guide slapped me a few times to soften my ear-to-ear grin.

Photo/Fred Garth



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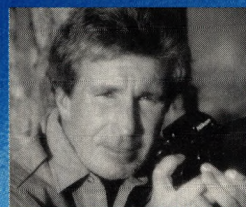
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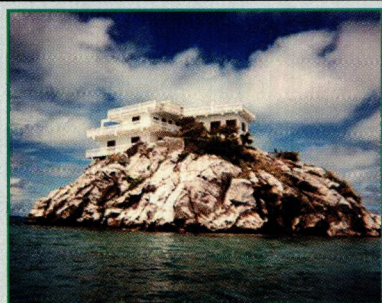
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by owners Jim and Kisty Engle who escaped North Dakota's cool winters 10 years ago. Jim also runs the island's chamber facility at the resort and is quickly acquiring the honorary title of Dr. Jim. The Lodge proudly displays the Shark Research Institute info board with examples of tags used by scientist who've been tagging Whales Sharks over the past few years.

Which reminds me. Whale Sharks. I almost forgot.

*Just offshore  
from Posada  
del Sol Resort,  
the [Jado]  
Trader rests on  
its side in 130  
feet of water  
and houses  
some mongo  
grouper.*

Okay, so Hugo was yelling to the boat captain, who gingerly eased the boat toward the Bonitos and baitfish. Hugo and I were on top of the cabin straining our eyes for the huge shadow of the shark. He turned, I turned, the boat turned. We rocked and bobbed, searched and scanned, but after half an hour we grudgingly gave up the vigil. The Whale Shark slump continued, and I was homeward bound.

Two days later I returned home to a stack of bills and 237 friggin' e-mails. As I scanned them, one popped out. The subject was, "Whale Shark!!!" The date was the day after I left. The author was Hugo. Damn. 🐟

*Special thanks to Anthony's Key Resort, Inn of the Last Resort, French Harbor Resort, Coco View, Fantasy Island, Bay Islands Beach Resort, Laguna Beach Resort, Utila Lodge, Casa Romeo's and Rick's American Café.*



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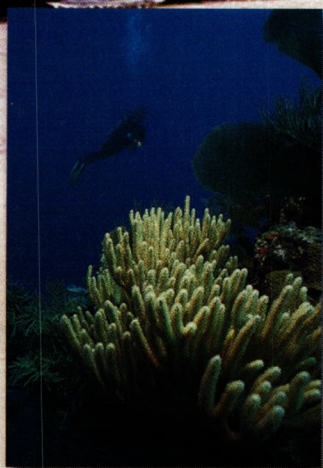
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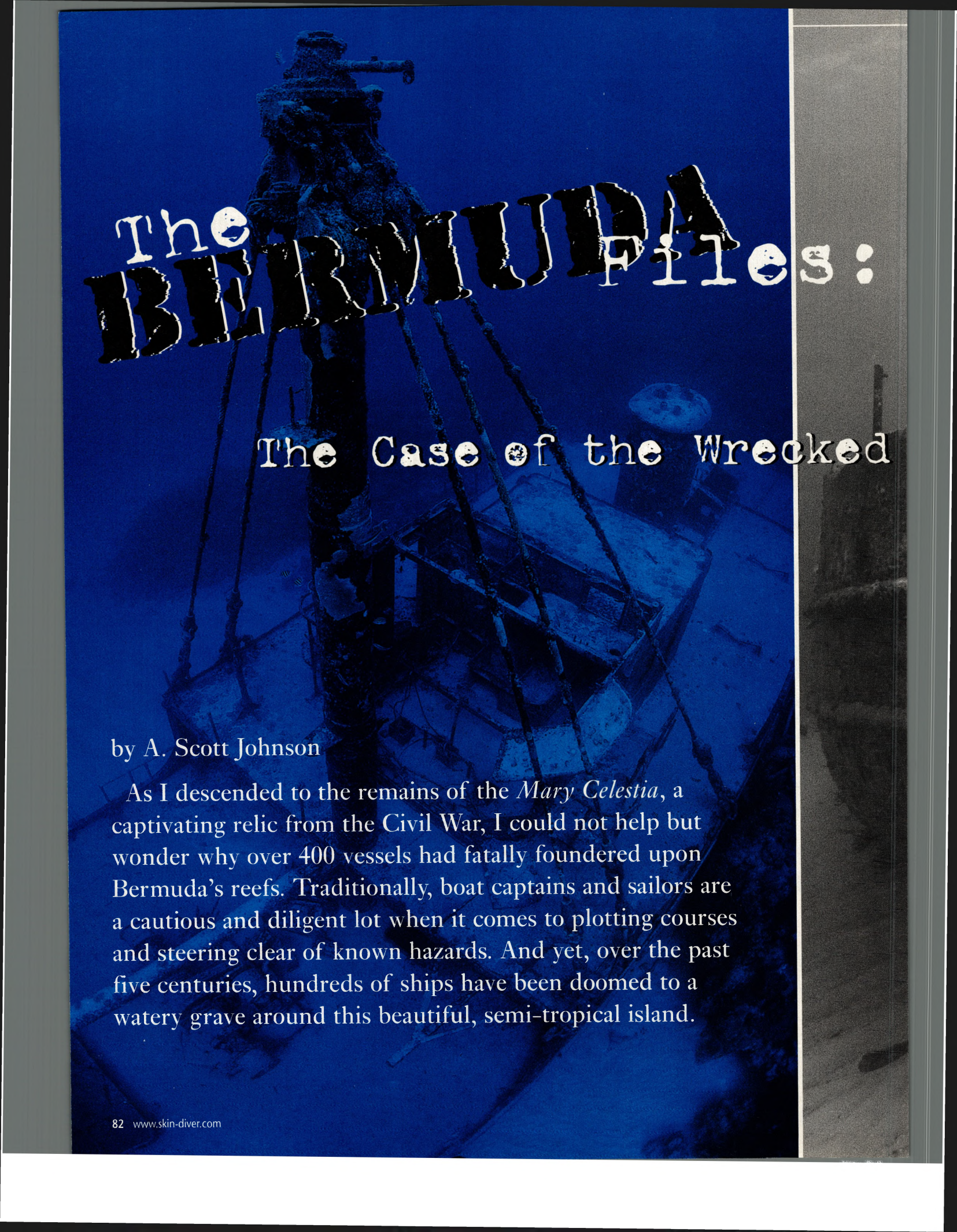
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# The BERMUDA Files:

## The Case of the Wrecked

by A. Scott Johnson

As I descended to the remains of the *Mary Celestia*, a captivating relic from the Civil War, I could not help but wonder why over 400 vessels had fatally foundered upon Bermuda's reefs. Traditionally, boat captains and sailors are a cautious and diligent lot when it comes to plotting courses and steering clear of known hazards. And yet, over the past five centuries, hundreds of ships have been doomed to a watery grave around this beautiful, semi-tropical island.



The *Hermes* (left and this photo) a 165-foot Panamanian Freighter sunk in 80 feet of water. Inset below: The *Minnie Breslau*.

## Ships

Even if we chalk up the first 200 wrecks to accidents or acts of God, surely news of the dangerous Bermuda waters would have spread throughout the world and limited future catastrophes. Perhaps an ingenious plot from a Clive Cussler novel could adequately explain the series of disasters, but I was puzzled. I decided to try my best Sherlock Holmes impersonation in an attempt to solve the case of Bermuda's myriad wrecks.

The information that I had collected from museums and research indicated a variety of likely suspects, which alone or in combination had prompted the shipwrecks. Dense fog, ferocious hurricanes, white squalls, relentless storms, the Bermuda Triangle, the Gulf Stream, bad luck, untimely ignorance and human error all surfaced as probable villains. Regardless of the perpetrator, there was primarily one weapon of choice—the 230 square miles of reef that protect Bermuda. I had also uncovered reports of bands of unscrupulous, but entrepreneurial, Bermudians who gained fame and fortune by using the reef as an instrument of destruction during the 18th

and 19th centuries. By placing safe passage markers in shallow reef areas, passing ships were tricked, wrecked, trapped, then looted.

Clearly, there were many pieces to this nautical puzzle, but I wanted to return to the scenes of the crimes before postulating any theories. My thought was that each wreck would be alive with echoes from the past; that diving among their remains would be like taking a brief step back in time. I expected each vessel to testify on its own behalf, thus giving me some clues.

As I continued my dive on the *Mary Celestia*, I

could picture the 225-foot side paddlewheel steamer churning through the ocean's surface. Her history, like the clues I was chasing, though, were shrouded in half-truths and hearsay. She operated under a variety of names while smug-





# The BERMUDA Files:

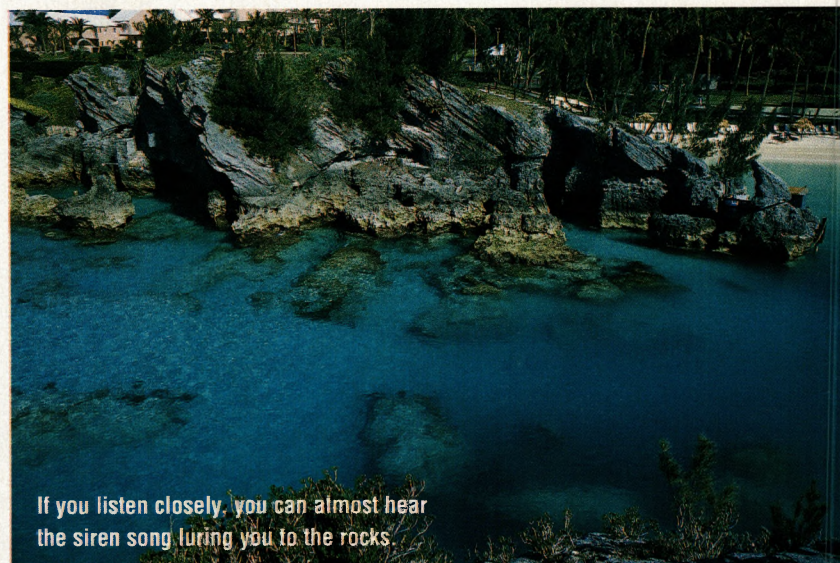
gling guns, ammunition, and food from England to the Confederate soldiers. Since Bermuda was allied with the South during the Civil War, the island was a bastion of safety for the Confederate ships and crew. I poked around the *Celestia's* remains to determine what caused her to plow into the South Shore reef in 1864. She lies in 55 feet of water, with



Bermuda's wreck-to-reef program in full swing.

one paddlewheel standing erect, while the other is heaped among numerous other artifacts in the sand nearby. But the sea and ship were keeping their secrets, so I decided to move on.

I turned to the *Minnie Breslau*. The 300-foot English steamer was loaded with wine and dried fruit when she struck the reef in 1873. Sadly, it was both her first and last voyage. Her



If you listen closely, you can almost hear the siren song luring you to the rocks.

rudder, four-bladed propeller, steam boiler and fractured wheelhouse are all that remain of her once proud profile. One mile from shore and at depths ranging from 30 to 70 feet, it takes much longer to dive the site than it does to reach it. And she, like the *Celestia*, was quite mum. I began to think not of clues but of conspiracies. But the truth is out there, so I decided to face the culprit myself and see what magic spell the reef might have cast over these ships.

## Skin Diver GUIDE BERMUDA

### GETTING THERE:

There are regularly scheduled flights to Bermuda from the USA, Canada and the UK. From North America, Bermuda is serviced by Continental, American, Delta Airlines, US Airways and Air Canada. Always bring a photo ID and passport to the airport. You will be asked to show it before you are allowed to check in. The departure tax on all air flights is \$20 (USD).

### BERMUDA FACTS & TIPS:

#### Best Time To Visit:

Year-round diving is possible, but summer months tend to be favored as the waters are warmer.

#### Topside Climate:

Bermuda has a temperate, semi-tropical climate. Daytime temperatures rarely drop below 60°F in the winter (November through March) or exceed 90°F (April through October). Humidity is slightly higher during the summer. Storms may be more prevalent during the winter months.

#### Water Temperature:

Water temperatures are typically in the mid to upper 60s°F from December through April (7 mm suit). May, June and November usually offer temps in the 70s°F (3 mm), while 80s°F are the norm from July through September (skin or shorty). Conversely, visibility can often approach 200 feet from December through April and exceed 100 feet in May, June, October and November. The visibility drops to 80 feet or so from July through September. On average, the cooler the water the better the water clarity.

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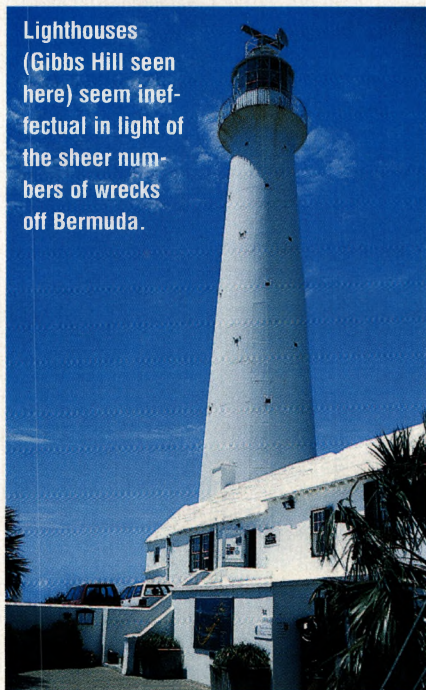
## THE WRECK IMPOSTERS

There are two types of wrecks surrounding Bermuda: historic and artificial. My primary focus was on the authentic wrecks, whose remains lay scattered in the sand and on the reef, but I could not pass up the chance to visit the *Hermes*.

Considered to be the island's most popular and photogenic wreck, the *Hermes* is fully intact and rests upright in only 80 feet of water. The 165-foot Panamanian freighter was abandoned due to ruined engines, then intentionally sunk in 1985. Her original resting place was a sandy area, many yards away from the reef. However, years ago, a major storm pushed the wreck against the reef, but amazingly left her in one piece and still standing tall. Upon entering the cargo hold, large Black and Nassau Groupers almost caused me to drop a camera when they suddenly materialized from the dark recesses. I decided to spend my remaining bottom time photographing the majestic mast, wheelhouse and bow.

A group of private investors, led by Michael Burke of Blue Water Divers, is currently negotiating with the Canadian government to purchase an expendable Navy ship. Bermuda's dive operators and tourism officials are intent on providing new artificial wrecks for divers, in order to maintain the island's reputation as one of the best wreck diving destinations in the world. The goal is to have the deal finalized by the end of the year, and the vessel sunk shortly thereafter. I joined Michael in trying to find a good location for the proposed wreck. The water around the island is so shallow and the reef system so pervasive, that finding the right spot will take time.

**Lighthouses**  
(Gibbs Hill seen here) seem infelicitous in light of the sheer numbers of wrecks off Bermuda.



To complete my investigation I turned my back on the silent hulks, and found myself cruising over, around and between reef formations. I began to understand how challenging it must be to safely guide a boat in these waters. How attentive the ships' captains had to be. Some sections of reef mockingly protrude from the water, as if warning or daring sailors to pass. However, other areas seem to sinisterly lurk just below the surface, waiting to eviscerate any unsuspecting ship.

Up close, however, the reef does not seem ominous at all. In fact, it is gorgeous, varied and healthy. The warm, clear, life-sustaining flow of the Gulf Stream has given the island the world's most northerly coral reef. These reefs are adorned with sea rods, sea plumes, seawhips, seafans, anemones and brain corals. The seafans, especially, are among the most attractive and plentiful specimens that I have ever encountered. Unique formations, such as arches, tunnels and

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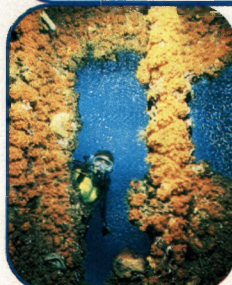
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Cannons still stand resolutely at the Royal Naval Dockyard.

partially roofed caverns are often filled with Glassy Sweepers, grouper, snappers and lobster. Curious parrotfish, angelfish and Sergeant Majors were my constant escorts and seemed as interested in me as I was in them.

The dives completed, I stood on the pulpit of the dive boat as it returned to the dock, watching the sun set over this isolated paradise of pink sand beaches, trying to put the pieces together, when I heard, ever so faintly, the answer.

After all the exploration and diving, I finally knew what had caused so many ships to end their days on Bermuda's reefs.

## Airtight Alibi

As if the thrill of diving world-class wrecks was not enough incentive to visit Bermuda, the island's dive operators offer specially designed, complimentary certificates to those who dive on any one of 18 designated wrecks. The program allows divers the opportunity to collect 18 special certificates during a single trip. Each certificate provides the shipwreck's name, a brief history and pre-sinking silhouette on parchment-style paper. After a day of diving one or more of the featured wrecks, your dive operator will present the proper certificate(s), complete with your name and the date.

The following wrecks were selected for their historic and/or photogenic attributes:

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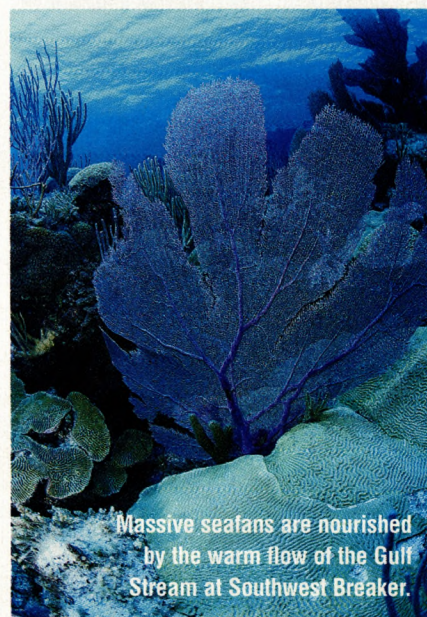
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## THE SEA WITHIN THE OCEAN: A WEIGHTY CONSPIRACY

The Sargasso Sea is a North Atlantic, free-floating sea. It is bound by the Gulf Stream, Canary, North Equatorial, Antilles and Caribbean currents. The unusual phenomenon has created a "moving" sea within an open ocean and has also given the Sargasso unique qualities. The sea's relative calm and somewhat limited water exchange with the rest of the Atlantic have resulted in water that has a higher salt content than is found in the rest of the ocean (due to high evaporation and low precipitation).

Since Bermuda and its wrecks are located in the Sargasso Sea, divers should prepare for increased water salinity. The saltier the water, the more weight that is needed during a dive.

This phenomenon also results in generally clearer, and warmer water than is usually encountered at this latitude. A nice plus for divers.

The legends surrounding the Sargasso Sea pre-date the myths of the the Bermuda Triangle by hundreds of years. Frequently referred to as the "Sea of Lost Ships," derelict vessels have been found here, in seaworthy condition but completely deserted. Other ships have been found, floating aimlessly, abandoned with food still on the mess table.

Like the Sirens in Homer's the *Illiad*, Bermuda's compelling beauty has long beckoned those who have sailed the Atlantic. The forlorn sailors that heard the island's sweet song must have scuttled their vessels to seek shelter in the island's embrace. The accounts of storms, mistakes and fate must have been craftily created rouses designed to hide the true nature of the wrecks and thus protect the escapee's intentions. Since each generation has its own share of wars, cultural crisis and purveyors of doom, I can certainly understand why many have longed to escape the chaos of the world by being shipwrecked in paradise.

Unfortunately, I too have befallen a tragic accident. A freak wave washed my return ticket overboard. So, while I sit and contemplate my terrible fate on a pink sand beach with a cold drink in my hand, I will continue to formulate my theories and explanations. Please tell my wife I miss her. I fear I may be here for a while. 🐠

*A special thanks to the Fairmont Southampton Princess, Blue Water Divers, Fantasea Diving, Nautilus Diving, Scuba Look, American Airlines and US Airways for their support.*



Another ship reduced to a rusting relic on Bermuda's notorious reef.

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# Look Out Boys, Here We Come

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## WOMEN DIVERS HALL OF FAME™

THE NUMBER OF WOMEN DIVERS IS on the rise. Currently, 36 percent of certified divers are women; a number which has increased by 27 percent just within the last five years (according to PADI).

But women in diving is nothing new. Twentieth century innovators, such as Dr. Sylvia Earle, Zale Parry and Cathy Church, have been leaving their marks in marine science, underwater photography



and film since the early '60s. Forty years later, it's women like these who are being inducted into the first Women Divers Hall of Fame (WDHOF).

"WDHOF is an international honor society dedicated to recognizing women divers who have contributed significantly to the exploration, understanding,

**A WDHOF nominee's diving achievements... must have made an impact on [an] international level**

safety and enjoyment of our underwater world," says Hillary Viders, Ph.D., co-founder of WDHOF.

WDHOF is a collaboration of Beneath the Sea, Women Underwater Ezine, Women's Scuba Association and the Underwater Society of America, along with Viders. In March 2000, they began inducting the WDHOF's current 103 members from around the world.

The non-profit corporation holds induction ceremonies every March at the Beneath the Sea Expo in Chicago, IL. In addition, several WDHOF award ceremonies and events are hosted by major

dive shows and other venues throughout the year. But don't expect an invite for mastering your buoyancy. These ladies are special.

"A WDHOF nominee's diving achievements and contributions must have made an impact on a national or international level," says Viders. "If someone knows an outstanding female diver that he/she would like to nominate, they can do so by filling out

a nomination form online. Then, the Nomination Committee reviews the applications and makes the final decision."

For more information about nominations, members, sponsorship opportunities and scholarships, visit [www.wdhof.org](http://www.wdhof.org). Look for more news on WDHOF in upcoming issues of Skin Diver.

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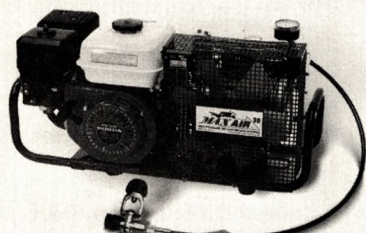
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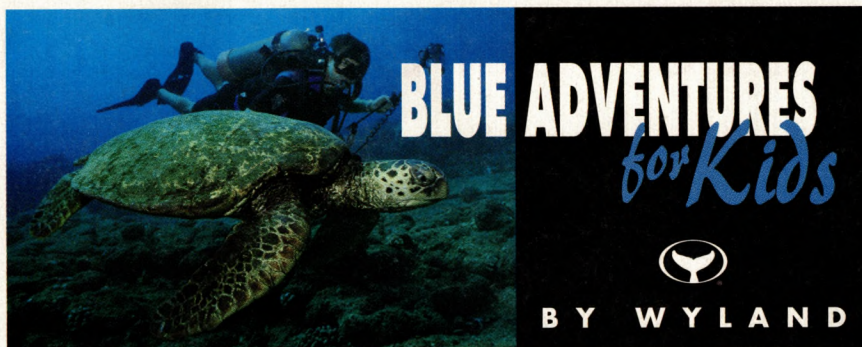
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# WHAT FLAVOR IS THAT JELLYFISH?

**Asking your child the right questions makes all the difference in the world**

THERE IS A SAYING THAT GENIUS IS simply the art of seeing the world in a new, fresh way. If that's true, then the little boy I saw standing in front of the octopus tank a few months ago at the Birch Aquarium at Scripps in La Jolla, California, might be a distant relative of Albert Einstein.

"Look!" the boy told his father. "He's playing hide and seek." The father, who was apparently used to such statements, gave the animal one of those if-you've-seen-one-octopus-you've-seen-'em-all looks, nodded, and guided the boy to the next tank.

Wait! I wanted to tell the father. Your kid just made a scientific inquiry—and you didn't even notice! He made a fundamental observation about a behavior that the animal uses to survive in the wild. More importantly, he took a first step toward learning that could have been even more enriching if his father had only responded with one simple, basic question: "Why do you think the octopus behaves that way?"

Together, the father and son could have explored how the octopus uses camouflage for everything from protection to hunting. They could have talked about its body shape and how that shape allows the octopus to fit into small crevices where it can snag prey and

avoid predators. They could have talked about the animal's texture, its big eyes and its tentacles—and how all those characteristics benefit it.

"A parent doesn't need to know all the names of the animals at the aquarium," says Arlene de Strulle, Director of Education of the Birch Aquarium at Scripps. "But they should know how to look at something and how to ask questions about it. I tell parents to have their children point out what they're seeing. You'd be surprised at how easy it is to read a fish by looking at its fins, scales and mouth. All those things will tell you about where it lives and what it does for a living."

Aquariums like the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, the Monterey Bay Aquarium



**Aquariums—A great place for your kids to get up close and personal with the creatures of the sea.**

um and Birch in California, offer kids an incredible opportunity to interact with animals in carefully recreated naturalistic habitats. Where else can your child get up close and personal with a seahorse—a master of camouflage that

Photo/Ken Kurtis



even the most experienced divers overlook in the wild? But don't stop there. Bring your child into that animal's world. Look at the tiny mouth of the seahorse. It has to eat small things. Don't human babies have to eat small food? If you visit an aquarium's touch tank, ask your child why the shellfish cling so tightly to the rocks. When the child figures out that a mussel depends on that clinging ability to survive against the constant pounding surf in its ocean home, perhaps he'll think twice about ripping off a mussel on his next visit to a real tidepool.

"Most aquariums have a mission," says de Strulle. "It could be to teach

**"...have children point out what they're seeing. You'd be surprised how easy it is to read a fish by looking at its fins, scales and mouth."**

children about the life in that region where the aquarium is located. At Birch, we've divided our exhibits among different regions of the California coastline. As you move from tank to tank, you see a different part of our ocean and the different colors and shapes of fish, and how they use their bodies. This is where the parents can use the aquarium to guide their child's observation of life."

When parents bring their children to an aquarium, they are expanding their world. They show them that it's not just humans that live on this planet. The children learn about the fragility of life, and come to understand how to interact with other living things with reverence and care.

I've always believed that people are more inclined to protect the things they know and care about. And if that's not a good enough reason to set aside next weekend for an aquarium visit, I don't know what is. 🐟

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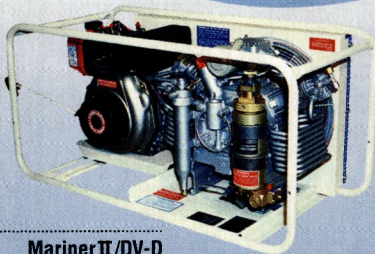
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BY MICHELLE DANNER

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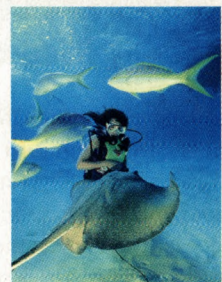
Want to dive Grand Cayman? Check out the site, pick a location and you'll find pictures and information to

### New Virtual Dives

help you chose the right dive for you. The sites are also a source for accommodations, dive operators, topside activities, restaurants, attractions, weather, car rentals and more. And if you're looking for visual confirmation of both the Bahamas and the Cayman Islands' crystal blue water and fantastic diving, check out the photo galleries.

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# Skin Diver travel guide

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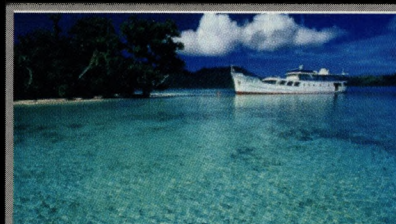
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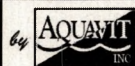


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# **Don't Panic With Your Mouth Open**

**MY BUDDY AND I HAD OVER TWO YEARS DIVING experience each and had completed our rescue certification. We had been diving together many times before and felt comfortable**

diving with one another and each other's equipment. So when at the end of our one-week vacation, we decided to make one last shore dive to a promising site, I had no idea I would end up fighting for both of our lives.

Before preparing any of our equipment, we walked down to the beach and checked out the dive site. The waves were four to five feet, but were mainly beyond the protected cove area. I spotted three buoys positioned about 75 yards apart; there was a current heading south. Our dive plan was to descend

within the protected cove to avoid the heavy surf, then swim east to the wall. Once to the wall, we would head north for 20 minutes into the current, then drift 15 minutes back.

Once we descended to the bottom and headed east, the water cleared and the wall came into sight. We descended behind the wall, and the current felt very minimal. When we reached the 20-minute mark, my buddy and I signaled to each other to turn around. Within five minutes, I realized the wall looked unfamiliar, but I assured myself that I had just missed some of the items the first time. After 10 more minutes, I realized something was wrong. We had passed both of the floating buoys anchored to the sea bottom and were now looking at the third buoy. This meant the current was much stronger than we had anticipated. If we passed the third buoy, we would

be in an unprotected area with a swift southern current. My buddy and I both checked our air, and we each had 1,500 psi. We decided to head up to do a surface check. Outside of the protective cove, the environment had completely changed. We were both hit with 5- to 6-foot breakers as soon as we broke the surface, and couldn't speak to each other without getting a mouthful of saltwater. The current, that had felt minimal at 60 feet was now pushing us around as if we were in a washing machine. I signaled to my buddy to descend. I was kicking as hard as I could into the strong current when I looked back and saw that she was not following. I resurfaced, and my buddy was shaking her head that the current was too strong. I looked toward the shore for an exit point, but the waves were crashing into the jagged rocks along the shoreline—escaping harm would be nearly impossible.

“We are going to be slammed into the rocks and killed,” my buddy squealed. Remembering what my instructor said during my rescue course, I swam over to my buddy to make sure her BC was inflated and to try to calm her down. Before I could reach her, she began taking her regulator out of her mouth, allowing what seemed to be gallons of saltwater down her throat. I could see the panic in her eyes. Grabbing onto the yoke of her tank, I tried to calm and convince her that we could make the surface swim back to the cove. But she would hear none of it, and the waves were bringing us closer to the rocks. Just then, I started yelling at her to put her regulator in her mouth, lie on her back and start kicking. Once I began yelling, she seemed to snap out of it and began saving herself. We held onto each other, towing and kicking as hard as we could until we made it back to the cove. Exhausted, we climbed back onto the beach with less than 200 psi. We sat speechless, knowing we'd barely managed to escape a dangerous situation.

—LORI P. MILLER

- First, we should have trusted our navigational skills.
- Next, we shouldn't have panicked. More times than not, you have the tools right in front of you to survive.
- When we noticed the current from shore, we should have asked the local dive shop operator about the currents along the wall.
- Finally, I would highly recommend a rescue course to everyone, after all, the person you save might be the last person you would expect—yourself.

wall came into sight. We descended behind the wall, and the current felt very minimal. When we reached the 20-minute mark, my buddy and I signaled to each other to turn around. Within five minutes, I realized the wall looked unfamiliar, but I assured myself that I had just missed some of the items the first time. After 10 more minutes, I realized something was wrong. We had passed both of the floating buoys anchored to the sea bottom and were now looking at the third buoy. This meant the current was much stronger than we had anticipated. If we passed the third buoy, we would

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